

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

No. 65.—VOL. III.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 6, 1864.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[ANDREW NOLAN'S GLIMPSE OF BEATRICE AND HIS RIVAL.]

THE WARNING VOICE.

By the Author of "Mrs. Larkell's Boarding School," "Man and his Idol," &c.

CHAPTER VII.

HOLT'S SON'S BROTHER.

How doth my son—and brother?
Thou tremblest, and the whiteness of thy cheek
Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.

Shakespeare.

As general overlooker of the Ingarstone estates, Morris Holt was liable to be called upon at all hours, by day and by night, on all sorts of business, and utterly without regard to his personal comfort or physical requirements. Everybody went to Holt for advice or instruction, as the case might be, until, as he expressed it, "they pretty nigh worried his life out."

In reality, it was rather agreeable to him than otherwise to have his life thus imperilled; for he was an active man, and a vain man, and he liked to feel that he was indispensable to the whole parish, and that, in fact, nothing could go on without him.

So, he was neither startled nor annoyed when, in the faint grey of early morning—the morning which was just breaking as Andrew Nolan's mysterious visitor quitted his cell—he was roused out of a sound sleep by a shower of pebbles rattling upon the window of his bedroom.

Without a thought he was out of bed, and had swung open the casement, and thrust out his night-capped head with a gruff "What now?"

"Boulder's very bad, sir," replied a low-speaking country voice.

"Bad? Boulder bad? What's the matter with him?" demanded Holt, sharply.

"Kind o' p'isowed, sir, I should say, along o' eatin' of nuts," was the slow rejoinder. "Fast he was took terrible bad, and now he's onsensible."

"And who has charge of his prisoner?"

"Nobody, sir."

Holt snorted out an imprecation, drew in his head

with a jerk, whipped off his night-cap, and scrambled into his clothes almost in a breath. He was both indignant and alarmed. This man, Boulder, was a gamekeeper, who had been promoted to the office of constable for the time, and left in charge of the cell in which Nolan was confined. He had been selected because he was both intelligent and strong as a horse, but Holt had from the first some misgivings whether, from the importance of the charge against the prisoner, he ought not personally to have kept watch over him, and now he blamed his own folly in not doing so.

"Insensible wi' eatin' nuts!" he repeated to himself, incredulously, as he twisted a red cotton handkerchief round his neck, and left the bow sticking out under his left ear, looking as if he had tried to hang himself, and had just been cut down in time. "Nobody ever heard of such a thing. There's somethin' up—I'd take my oath there's somethin' up."

With that he wrenched himself into his waistcoat and coat in one, caught up his straw hat, and was about to dart from the room.

A glance at the bed reminded him that his wife might wake, and be alarmed at his absence. So he stole up to her pillow, intending to rouse her gently; but, to his surprise, he found her eyes wide open, and filled with tears.

"Why, Hannah!" he said, "how's this? What ails ye?"

"Don't ask me, Morris!" she replied. "It's nothing. Only my head. Don't mind me. Go!"

He obeyed; but it was with anything but a cheerful mind that he blundered down the gloomy staircase into the kitchen, and let himself out into the garden.

"That woman'll fret herself into a low way," he said.

He knew well enough why she fretted, and it was because of that knowledge that there was a scowl upon his face as he went out to meet the man who waited patiently for him in the dull, chill morning—and it still rested there as they walked away together.

A few minutes had elapsed, and it was still dusk,

when a crouching, slouching figure suddenly presented itself round the corner of the cottage, and stole toward the door—stole on tiptoe, and on the soft mould of the flower-beds, so that not a sound disturbed the silence.

In the uncertain light it was difficult to make out what kind of individual this was; but a roundness of the shoulders and a certain roll in his gait, suggested that the intruder had known something of the sea, and a rough pea-jacket closely buttoned up, aided the idea.

Holt on going out had simply left the door on the latch, after the usual custom in country places.

The stranger seemed aware of this, and on reaching the porch quietly slipped into the cottage, and closed the door behind him. He then found himself in the dark kitchen, into which streaks of light stole through the closed shutters, while there was a spectral gleam upon the hearth, from the faint morning shining down the broad chimney. Dark as it was, the man seemed to be able to find his way about perfectly well. He made at once for a cupboard, from which he took a portion of a loaf of bread. There also he found a pan of yellow ware, and with this he stole into a kind of pantry adjoining the kitchen, and reappeared with the vessel full of home-brewed ale. Both the bread and the ale he set upon the table near the hearth, and proceeded eagerly with the consumption of both.

He was engaged in this way, eating and drinking in a wolfish, gulping way, as a famishing man is apt to satisfy the gnawings of hunger, when his attention was arrested by the creaking of the stairs.

Some one was descending. The stairs opened into the kitchen and he must be seen!

Terrified at the idea he started to his feet, and there was something horribly suggestive in the manner in which he snatched up a knife, with which he had cut the bread, and grasped it dagger-wise.

"If it's Curly," he half-muttered, "I'll make it ugly for him."

But it was not Curly. The ghost-like figure was that of a woman, loosely wrapped up in her white



night-dress, confined about the shoulders with a shawl.

At sight of her the man laid down the knife very softly, and advanced a few noiseless steps.

"Mother!" he said.

She staggered back and raised her hands, and would have screamed; but, controlling herself by a fierce effort, she suffered only a faint gasp to escape her lips. As she stood, trembling with agitation, the intruder advanced close to her, and made as if he would have thrown his arms about her. But she held him off. She put out a weak, tremulous hand, and seemed to shrink away from something that had pollution in it.

"You here, Tim!" she cried, in a tone of suppressed horror.

The words and the action by which they were accompanied seemed alike exasperating to the man. He drew back as he replied sullenly.

"Yes," he said, "here!"

"Oh, Tim!" said Hannah Holt, who had been thus scared, "if he should find you here?"

She took a step forward as if with some intention of securing the door.

The man put his right hand upon her arm and stayed her.

"No fear," he said, "I watched him well off."

"But he might come back on the sudden."

"And if he did we could but meet," was the answer.

The woman put up her thin hands entreatingly.

"Not for the world!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Tim, its cruel of you to do this. Its cruel to come here when you know what may happen."

"It may be," replied the man, sullenly, "but I'll tell you what's more cruel, mother. Hunger's more cruel. Hunger'll drive a man to do almost anything, and it drove me here. And where should I go to?" he asked, with sudden animation, and with more savage bitterness in his tone. "It's my home. It's as much mine as his."

He pointed with his thumb towards the stairs in the direction in which he knew Curly Holt was sleeping.

"I'm the oldest. I've more right to be here than he has. Why should he be fed up and made much of and I drove away like a beast? I'm as good as he."

"No, Tim, no!" said the terrified woman.

"I tell ye, I'm as good as he," shouted the man, fiercely. "It was never proved against me. I never had a fair chance or a fair hearing. What if I did shoot a hare or so? Where's the country lad that hasn't? What's the use of tryin' to make a young chap believe in their game laws? He won't do it. The Ingarstones would have had 'em painted up in church if they could have had their way, 'stead of the commandments. They're fonder of 'em than they are of their bible, that's my belief. And 'cause they'd found out I'd shot a hare or so, or maybe a pheasant or two, they set it down as I'd rob a church. They was all ag'in me. Father as bad as any. They hustled and drove me off to jail, and all the time I was as innocent as you was. If they was my last words I'd say it—I was innocent!"

In his excitement he unconsciously raised his voice till it sounded all over the quiet house.

Hannah Holt, trembling with mortal terror put her cold hand on his lips.

"Hush Tim," she said, "I never doubted ye."

"Then why am I to be hunted down and left to starve like the vermin in the woods? Why should I stand it?"

"You know your father, Tim," returned the woman, meekly, "he's a hard man. A good man, but hard. And when he'd once cast ye off—"

An impatient exclamation escaped the man's lips. "Well, well, Tim; I won't anger ye," said the mother; "but what brings ye in these parts again? And just at this time, too!"

"What brings me?" was the reply. "What has ever brought me? Misfortune—hunger—desperation. And why not at this time as well as at any other time?"

"Why, Tim! you know what's happened, don't ye?"

"Happened?"

"Yes. Haven't you heard of it? They've took somebody for the murder."

The man addressed retreated a step or two, as if with intense astonishment.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed fervently.

Hannah Holt shuddered.

"I say, 'thank God,' mother," continued Tim, "and I mean it. Isn't it bad enough that I should have been found guilty of the burglary at Ingarstone, and ruined for life through it; but that you must make me out worse, and believe that I've murder on my hands? I'm innocent of it, mother, as I've told you fifty times, and yet you won't believe me. Father's bad enough, but you're worse. He thinks I've disgraced him and he casts me off; but while you stick to me you think worse of me than ever he did."

The indignation of the man was very natural, apparently very genuine; yet the poor woman shook her head doubtfully. Her convictions were too strong to be argued away.

"I can't help it, Tim," she moaned. "Nobody knows what I know, and so you're safe. But I can't forget how it all happened. I can't get it out of my mind that your six months' for the burglary was just up, and you'd come out o' prison without a penny, and had slunk home here and was hiding about for fear of your father. And that night the murder was done, and Lady Lydia was found in the Weir, you was out all night, and the next morning you come and put a sovereign in my hand, and said your fortune was made, and you was goin' off on a sharin' voyage. I can't forget it, Tim, or how they come and told me what happened, and something said in my ear, 'He's done it,' and I dropped down on that floor like a stone."

"And for all that I'm innocent," the man exclaimed impatiently. "Mother, mother! will nothing convince you?"

"I pray to heaven that your words may be true," she answered.

"They are. Indeed, indeed they are!" he cried.

"And that your soul mayn't have the stain of blood upon it," she went on, as if not hearing his protestation.

"What would you have me say or do?" the man asked, in desperation.

"Why, Tim, this much," was Hannah Holt's answer. "We can't undo the past. What we've done we've done, and there it is, God help us! But we needn't make bad worse."

"Make—bad—worse?" he repeated slowly.

"Yes, Tim, I don't ask you to confess it. You wouldn't do that, even to your mother. 'Tisn't that you'd fear putting your life in my hand; but it's too awful a thing for a man ever to own to, with his lips. But what I say to ye, is—Don't add crime to crime. Don't pile one sin on another. Don't go stainin' your soul so black, my child, that repentance can't wash it out, and there'll be no peace for you in this world and no hope in the next."

"What do you mean, mother?"

He asked the question with perfect sincerity, quite unable to tell to what all this tended.

Hannah Holt did not leave him long in suspense.

"So sure as you let this man as they've took up suffer for your act," she said, "you'll be adding murder to murder, and the second'll be ten times worse than the first. It will, Tim, and you'll find it so. I've thought of it from the moment I heard what had happened. At first I feared it was you they'd got. And since I found it wasn't, I've had no rest and no peace. And so sure as you let that man be hung—"

She had sat down on the stairs while speaking, and now held up a warning finger.

Exasperated at her words, Tim caught at her thin hand savagely.

"Let him be hung!" he exclaimed. "Haven't I told you, mother, that I'm innocent—innocent as the child unborn? What's it to me, then, who's hung or who isn't? Do you want to see me swinging on the gallows? Would it be a pleasure to you to get rid of me and your trouble together that way? If it would, say so. If it would, go to Ingarstone and tell him your tale and set him on my track. He'll soon find me. I shan't run. My life's not so pleasant to me that I shall trouble about it one way or another. And maybe it'll be a pleasant thing to you to know that you had it—you and father between you!"

He dropped the thin hand and folded his arms. There was light enough to see that a savage scowl contracted his features, and the woman looking up was terrified at their demoniacal expression.

It confirmed her fit the terrible suspicion that gnawed at her heart.

"Don't be hard or angry with me, Tim," she said, "it's your mother that speaks, and how bitter it is to me to suspect you no tongue can tell. But I do, Tim: I can't help it, and rather than another should lose his life through my child's wickedness, I—"

She did not finish the sentence.

While these words were upon her lips the sound of the gravel path crushed beneath a heavy tread caught the ears of both.

"'Tis he!" cried the intruder.

"What! Your father? Hide! There'll be murder if he finds you here. Hide, hide!"

She clasped her hands and dropped on to the stairs. With glassy eyes she saw the figure of her boy disappear into the gloom. The next moment the door opened, letting in a flood of faint daylight. The woman saw at a glance that Tim was gone, then she buried her face in her skinny hands.

It was Morris Holt who opened the door.

His astonishment at seeing his wife on the stairs was intense.

"What in the name of goodness are you doing there, Hannah?" he asked.

"It's my head, Morris," she moaned; "I thought a cup of tea might do me good."

"Tea! Oh, if that's all, we'll very soon have that," said Holt, and he went toward the window as if with the intention of opening the shutters and letting in daylight.

Terrified at what might happen, Hannah forced herself to rise and staggered after him.

"Don't, Morris!" she said, "don't trouble yourself to light the fire yet. I'll be better soon, maybe. Tell me, why did they send for ye? What was it all about?"

"Well, I don't jestly understand," replied the husband, with the air of a man greatly puzzled. "Boulder was bad, pretty well dead, the doctor says, through eatin' some foreign kind of nuts—Jatropha nuts, I think he called 'em. Boulder picked 'em up at the door of the lock-up, where they must have been scattered o' purpose, the doctor says, for they're uncommon and rank poison. But the point is—who could ha' done it and for why?"

"Was your prisoner safe, Morris?" asked the agitated woman.

"Yes; that's the marvel of it. If he'd been gone I could understand why Boulder was poisoned in this artful fashion, but Andrew Nolan was safe in his cell."

"Andrew Nolan!" the woman repeated, mechanically.

As she did so, both were startled by a sound that was between a gasp and an exclamation; it was followed by the ring of a falling knife on the brick floor.

CHAPTER VIII

RED-DOUBLED MYSTERY.

And my soul from out that shadow shall be lifted—
Never more. *Edgar Poe*

WHILE Ingarstone was shut up, the justices of that part of the county had held their occasional sittings in the large sanded parlour of the Nine Elms.

It was not often that they were called together, and when they did meet they had usually to transact business of the most petty description. Infractions of the game laws occupy half the time of the county justices of England, and those of this particular corner of Kent were no exception to the general rule. Drunken assaults varied their duties, and sometimes they had a field-day over a felony—the stealing of a stake from a hedge, a handful of cherries from a wall, or something equally important.

The sensation which a charge of murder would be sure to create may therefore be imagined.

That could hardly be heard at the Nine Elms. On the other hand, exception was taken by many to the justice-room at Ingarstone being used, seeing that the offence with which Andrew Nolan was charged was against a member of the family to which it belonged. But this was overruled by the legal adviser of the justices, and on the morning after the hapless Boulder was so nearly poisoned by the Jatropha nuts, he received orders to convey his prisoner to Ingarstone.

Nolan, on quitting his cell, walked through a lane of constables out into the street.

There he was received by a crowd of gaping villagers, who neither cheered him nor hissed him, they simply stared as they would have done at the wild beasts, or the wax-works, or any other show.

Though closely guarded, the prisoner was not subjected to the indignity of handcuffs. Lord Ingarstone had given private instructions to that effect, and also that he should be treated with all deference and respect—at least until his guilt had been to some extent proved.

The bearing of the prisoner was perfectly calm and self-possessed.

No doubt the calmness was partially assumed, and at the cost of a hard struggle; but it impressed the crowd greatly. How far it was due to a consciousness of innocence, and how far the promise of vengeance given him by his midnight visitor might have had to do with it we cannot pretend to say.

At the end of the lane of constables stood a covered cart, in charge of Holt, who wore a gold band round his hat as an insignia of petty-constableness, and Crofts, his subordinate. Holt invited the prisoner to take a seat in the cart, which he did, and in this manner, preceded and followed by constables with drawn staves, Andrew Nolan re-entered Ingarstone. How strange had been the vicissitudes of a few hours!

Only four days before, he had arrived there as the accepted suitor of Lady Beatrice Ingarstone. They had been thrown together at Hastings during the previous summer; a strong feeling had sprung up between them; Lord Ingarstone had recollected that Admiral Nolan and himself had been bosom friends (a recollection which had greatly strengthened on the discovery that the admiral's relict, Nolan's mother, was of the ducal house of Montregan); and as the

result, the young people were understood to be "engaged." It was to bring that engagement to a consummation that Nolan had come to Ingarstone.

He now approached the noble mansion a prisoner! His reputation was stained by a charge which of all others might have filled a generous heart with horror.

It was boldly alleged that he had taken the life of a fellow-creature—a young and innocent woman—and not only so, but that he had stooped to the pitiful infamy of robbing the body of his victim.

These were the charges which the county justices had that morning assembled to investigate, so far, at least, as ascertaining whether there was sufficient ground to put the prisoner on his trial before a jury of his countrymen.

News of the romantic occurrence at the ball had spread like wild-fire through the county, and the room devoted to the administration of justice was crowded.

So was that portion of the park near it.

The prisoner was not conveyed through the crowd, but taken to a private entrance on the other side of the house, and conducted thence through long and tortuous passages.

As they passed through one of these the door of a room abruptly opened.

The sun was shining into it, and it was full of light, especially in contrast to the gloom of the passage.

Nolan involuntarily raised his head and looked in.

Then he started, and a sharp cry of agony escaped his lips.

"What is it?" asked Holt, who was walking before, and who, on hearing the cry, turned sharply round.

But by that time the door, which had been opened by a domestic, was closed, and he saw nothing.

He did not know that Nolan had recognized Beatrice Ingarstone seated in the window of that room, the sunshine pouring in upon her hair and turning it to gold. No: nor that she had a companion who half knelt at her feet, turning over the pages of a great book of prints which she held in her lap, but at which she was not looking.

Not looking at them, because her eyes were fixed upon the face of the kneeling man, who looked up as the door opened, and revealed to Nolan the sharply-outlined profile of his face—the face of Ormond Redgrave!

Was it strange that when Andrew Nolan suddenly presented himself, a moment after, in the bright blaze of the justices' room, his face was livid, and there was an expression upon it that the ignorant naturally referred to guilt?

Nolan loved the Lady Beatrice with all the love of a strong, passionate nature. It could hardly be, then, but that the sight he had just witnessed should upset all his calmness.

For a time he was like a man in a dream.

He was conscious of standing at the end of a long table covered with a red cloth—alone. He knew that behind him half-a-dozen constables stood side by side, like a wall. He knew that before him, high up toward the roof, there was a circular window, through which the light poured down, dazzling and blinding, upon his face, and that beneath this window, at a cross table, sat four or five gentlemen, distinguished from all the rest of the persons present by the vulgar affectation of wearing their hats. These he knew were the justices. He knew that a little apart from the justices sat Lord Ingarstone, got up in an amazingly faultless cravat, and beside him the handsome young Lord Cecil. Further, he knew that on all sides, except where their worshipers sat, eager faces were pressing forward—faces that were tanned, freckled, fresh, rosy, pale, in fact, were of every description—but all animated by one look, that of eager curiosity, of which he was the object.

But conscious as he was of all this, it did not occupy his mind.

He was like a man who, having gazed at the sun, carries with him as he turns away a luminous impression of it which blinds him. So he was blinded by that momentary glimpse of the fair girl, gazing enraptured at his accuser—there lay the bitter sting—at his accuser kneeling at her feet.

While this image stirred all the jealous bitterness of his heart, and made him sick with the agony it caused, certain formalities had been gone through, and he was aware that a witness was being examined, and that certain evidence was being given.

It was Morris Holt who was speaking, and who was detailing the particulars of the murder of Lydia Ingarstone, much as he had told them to his son, Curly, a few nights before.

The prisoner at first strove in vain to fix his attention on what he heard. This was noticed by the scrutinizing eyes fixed upon his face and set down against him.

"He knows all about it," people whispered; "more than Holt can tell him."

Presently his manner changed and his face and attitude were alike expressive of deep attention.

As the constable's narrative finished, the chairman put a question.

"Do you happen to have any evidence as to whether the prisoner was in this part of the country at the time of this direful occurrence?" he said.

"Yes, your worship," Holt replied.

The prisoner looked aghast.

"He was staying with his mother at Sir Fordham White's place, about six miles up the river, at this very time," said Holt.

The information obviously told on Nolan's mind, and that powerfully.

It was the first link connecting him with the crime.

"Are you certain as to the date?" the chairman asked. "Mr. Nolan has spent the greater part of his life at sea, and soon after that date, was, we hear, in America. Now—"

"There can be no mistake, sir," interrupted Holt; "the police at Maidstone have his name on their books at that time."

"His name on their books?"

"Yes, as coming to give information of the loss of one of Sir Fordham's dogs, supposed to have been stolen."

"Oh, that's all," said the chairman in a disappointed tone, as he sank back in his chair.

The fact of the name on the police books had sounded so ominous, and promised so much, that this mere question about a dog seemed nothing. Still, it was a link in the chain. It was conclusive so far as proving that Nolan was not at sea at the time, but on the contrary was on the spot, and might have committed the crime.

Other evidence of a corroborative nature was given, and then Lord Ingarstone told what had happened in his drawing-room with regard to the bracelet.

The court listened with breathless attention.

"And did the prisoner offer no explanation as to how he came possessed of the bracelet?" asked one of the magistrates.

"None whatever," replied his lordship.

"He did not say that he had bought it, or found it, or that it had been given to him?"

"He said nothing. Positively nothing."

"Simply permitted himself to be taken into custody?"

"Not so much permitted as insisted on it; asserting that the charge was so serious, that he preferred throwing on us the responsibility of proving it."

"Very remarkable!" exclaimed the magistrate.

And all present concurred in the opinion that it was very remarkable indeed.

The next witness was Ormond Redgrave.

He had kept in the background up to the time of being called forward, and Nolan's jealous heart had pictured him still lingering at the knees of the fair Beatrice, callous and indifferent to the fate of one whom he had supplanted and destroyed. He was mistaken and did Redgrave an injustice. Redgrave, in spite of his pride of birth, and the dignified bearing, so often set down as cold and haughty, was not heartless. He felt acutely for Nolan, almost as acutely as if unexceptionable blood had flowed in the man's veins, though of course no trace of this found expression in his well-trained face.

That was as calm and untroubled as he stepped forward to give his evidence, as the marble faces of any of his ancestors on their sculptured tombs.

The contrast it presented, in this respect, to the face of the prisoner, was very striking. Nolan could not regard his rival with equanimity. All the bitter feelings which he had been nourishing in his breast since the moment of his accusation seemed to force themselves to a head, and his brow was black with the sorrow that rested upon it.

In a few words, Ormond Redgrave described his part in the occurrence already familiar to us, and then gave a brief account of the circumstances under which he had met the prisoner at Baltimore. He did not give the facts vindictively, but simply in justification of the course he had pursued in launching so heavy a charge against the prisoner.

The effect of his evidence was, of course, most damaging.

It closed the case.

"And now," said the presiding justice, addressing the prisoner, "we shall be very happy to hear what you may have to say in your defence."

"Very little," replied Nolan. "I might argue that it's hard on a man to charge him with a crime like this, just because he happens to have been staying in these parts at the time it was committed, and because he happens to have part of the plunder in his possession. But men have been hung before now, I know, on circumstantial evidence slighter than that, and especially when like me they've been backward in explaining how the suspicious property came into their possession. Gentlemen, it would have been easy for me at once and on the spot to have given that explanation."

Perhaps, I ought to have done it. I think it would have been better, but every man has a certain pride about him. Every man values his character, and when that's at stake, and with it all his prospects and all his happiness in this world, he's apt to shrink from confessions that may damage it beyond all chance of reparation."

He paused for a moment, and passed his hand over the clear, open brow, on which the sun was shining. Those near thought they saw a tear-drop glisten on his eyelashes.

"Thanks to that gentleman," he resumed, swallowing his emotion, and directing a fierce glance at Ormond Redgrave, "much that I had hoped to conceal is now known to you. He has lifted the curtain off these secrets of my life. You know now how it was that I quitted her Majesty's navy. You know it was through becoming the dupe—yes, the dupe, not the companion—of a most infamous gang of swindlers, that I found myself the inmate of a prison, and was struck off the books of the ship whose decks my father had trod as admiral, a disgraced man—disgraced, but innocent! As I hope for mercy, not from this court, but from heaven—I was an innocent man!"

His eyes flashed, his breast heaved, and there was a sudden raising of his voice as Nolan uttered these words.

"But," he resumed, "I could not prove this. I only knew it: I could not make others believe it. All I could hope for was, that my crime, as it was called, and my imprisonment might be alike forgotten. Thrust out of the service, which was my delight—my passion—I returned to England. I retired into seclusion. I determined to devote myself to the care of the aged mother whose heart had been well nigh broken at the news of my infamy, but who, of all the world, was willing to believe in my innocence. Circumstances threw me in the way of Lord Ingarstone. We met at Hastings. He had known my father and he recognized my mother. It was not my fault that he was ignorant of my misfortune, and I persuaded myself that it was hardly for me to make him acquainted with it. I see, now, that it would have been better if I had done so—if I had said at once, 'I am a marked, dishonoured man,' and so raised a barrier against what I knew was inevitable, my relations with Lord Ingarstone's family. But it was not pleasant, and it was not easy to do this. It was not pleasant nor easy to do it at first, and every hour, every day, as it passed away, rendered it still more difficult. My relations with his lordship's family became imperceptibly closer, and at last I yielded to a natural impulse and abandoned the idea of self-implication. I argued with myself that I was an innocent man—that the misfortune which had happened to me might never be known, and that I was, in fact, justified in acting as I did act. How miserably I was self-deceived what has happened only too clearly shows."

Lord Ingarstone rose as if about to speak.

The magistrate interposed.

"All this is a little beside the question," he said, "but we should prefer taking the prisoner's defence in his own terms. It may assist us in coming to a sounder conclusion."

Thus encouraged, Nolan proceeded.

"I have little more to say," he went on. "I have only offered this statement to show why it was that, on being charged with this serious offence, I did not at once offer the explanation that it was in my power to offer. It was simply, gentlemen, because that explanation must necessarily be scarcely less fatal to me than the charge itself. Mr. Redgrave's statement as to our former meeting removes all grounds for delicacy. You now know that I have been the inmate of a prison—that I am, in a legal sense, a criminal. Knowing that, I have only to say that it was while I was in the prison at Baltimore that the diamond bracelet which I so unconsciously presented to Lord Ingarstone's daughter came into my possession."

"Come into your possession?" asked the court.

"Yes."

"You will perhaps explain to us how this happened?"

"I will. And I will preface what I have to say with the remark that I do not hold myself altogether blameless in the manner in which I acquired it. I can only plead necessity, which at the time almost compelled me to yield to a strong temptation. There were in the prison at Baltimore a number of rough characters, and the regulations being very lax, I was thrown greatly among them. Among the rest was a young Englishman—quite a lad, but a sharp, clever, lively fellow, who seemed perfectly satisfied with his lot, but who, on the contrary, had a mania for escaping. One night, just before my time was up, I found this lad in my cell—he had stolen in through the window from his own. I asked him what he did there? 'You are going out in two days,' he said, 'and I want you to do me a favour.' I asked him what it was? 'To enable me to escape,' he replied."

I laughed at the idea. 'Do you think I am mad?' I asked. 'I know you are poor,' he answered. 'Your ship has left the harbour, and you will quit this place penniless and with the felon's brand upon you.' He spoke calmly and coolly. I could not deny that he was right. 'And how shall I better myself by assenting to what you ask?' I said. His reply was: 'Promise me to act as I instruct you, and I will give you the particulars of a hidden treasure, worth, at the lowest, a thousand pounds. It will involve you in no risk, no danger: give me your word, and it is yours.' Again I laughed at him. I told him I knew he was amusing me with a mere fiction. I did not believe him, and I did not pretend to do so. It was in vain that he took the most solemn oaths—that he prayed, untreated, begged of me to credit him, and help him. I was stone, and he left me as he came, without having gained his point.

'And he did not succeed?' the bench asked. 'In the end he did. All that night and the next day I thought over his words and over my helpless condition. The more I reflected on what had passed, the more I became convinced that he was in earnest, in short, when he came to me again that night, I yielded to his importunities. I gave him the promise, and in return he explained to me where I should find the treasure. On quitting the prison I kept my word. I gave him the assistance he required, and by means of which, I have every reason to believe he escaped.'

'And about the treasure?'

'I followed his instructions. He described a particular church in that town, and told me that before being taken he was hotly pursued and sought refuge in the spire of it, and there concealed the property he had about him, which consisted entirely of diamonds. He gave me the details as to the hiding of his treasure, which he said had been a curse to him since he had come possessed of it. On receiving my discharge and having nothing to do, I betook myself to this church, and after some difficulty succeeded in finding my way up into the spire. At first I lost myself in the darkness and among the intricacies of the place; but after a time I succeeded in discovering the exact spot pointed out to me. I then laid my hand upon a handkerchief, in which there was knotted up a quantity of heavy jewellery. The greater portion of that treasure consisted of diamonds. The bulk I turned to immediate account; the only portion I reserved consisted of a diamond bracelet, which has originated this charge against me.'

'There is one point in this extraordinary story,' said Lord Ingarstone, speaking for the first time, 'which strikes me we ought to be made acquainted with. We have not heard the name of this monstrous gen'rous fellow.'

'Your lordship means the name of the prisoner?'

asked Nolan.

'Precisely.'

'You shall have it; the name by which he went in the prison was—TIM HOLT.'

A piercing shriek rang through the court at the utterance of that name.

Morris Holt stepped forward promptly. His eyes were stern; his face did not relax a muscle of its official hardness.

'Remove the woman!' he called out, in the usher-like tones habitual to him.

'It's your own wife, Morris,' said those about him in explanation.

'What! His wife? Holt's wife?' said Lord Ingarstone rising. 'Surely, yes. And now I think of it, you've a second son, Holt, haven't you?'

But Holt answered sullenly, though deferentially:

'I've one son, my lord. Curly's my son.'

'But he has a brother?' asked his lordship.

'Likely, my lord.'

'Nonsense! You know—you know well enough; he has an elder brother, who was called Tim?'

Morris Holt shook his head.

'I can answer for my son, my lord, with dogged obstinacy; "as to my son's brother—I know nothing about him."

The feeling created in the court by these words was intensely painful.

'Have a care Holt,' said the presiding justice; 'you are well known and respected for your long services in this parish; but the mention of your elder son's name may place you in an awkward position. As to the charge against Mr. Nolan—his worship ceased calling him "the prisoner" from that point,—"what he had just said appears to me to throw an entirely new light upon it. I must confess that his story did strike me as improbable, but it receives singular confirmation from the name he has given as that of his fellow-prisoner. It is rather remarkable that of all the persons suspected of this horrible deed the young fellow, who I perfectly remember—who was known in these parts as Radical Holt—should never have been mentioned. It was my painful duty, I remember, to sentence him to a term of imprisonment for the part he took in a burglary at this very

house. The term of that imprisonment would expire about the time of the murder, and I confess it does appear to me not improbable that young Holt, moved by a bitter animosity against the Ingarstone family as the prosecutors, and perhaps urged on likewise by want consequent upon his misconduct, should have been tempted to this second crime. I say this strikes me as not improbable, and so strong is the conviction in my own mind that, with the concurrence of my brother justices, I shall adjourn the hearing of this case, and shall let Mr. Nolan out on bail, on his own recognizance, for one week. In the meantime I shall direct the most searching investigation to be made as to the whereabouts of this young man Holt, who, as I understood, returned to England some time since.'

Ormond Redgrave rose.

'Your worship thinks the evidence against the prisoner so slight that it warrants you in setting him free?' he asked.

The glance of a demon shot from beneath the brows of Andrew Nolan.

'He would keep me caged that he may make his way with her!' he thought, in the bitterness of his heart.

Their worships in reply to the question put to them said they had come to that conclusion.

'I do not object,' said Redgrave; 'only, as having taken a responsible part in this matter, I feel that I am compromised to the extent of seeing that the interests of justice are not defeated.'

As he resumed his seat, a constable stepped up and whispered to the magistrates. His communication evidently occasioned some surprise.

'Morris Holt,' said the chairman, turning to him, 'has your elder son been seen in this neighbourhood lately?'

'No,' he answered, confidently.

'Is it not a fact that he was at your house this morning?'

'This morning? No; I will take my oath of it!'

'I would advise you not to do so,' said the justice.

'May I ask your worship why?' exclaimed Holt, with genuine surprise.

'Because it might be my painful duty to commit you for perjury. Have a care, Morris Holt, or you may find yourself in an awkward position. Your denial of your son, coupled with the fact that he has been under your roof this very day, seems to point to a guilty knowledge of his crime, and a desire to screen him—'

'Screen him?' interposed the vindictive old man.

'I would rather see him hung to-morrow!'

'This court,' said his worship, with a shudder, 'is adjourned for one week.'

Thus it came about that Andrew Nolan found himself once more free—free to leave the dock, free to come and go as he would, but not free to re-enter the doors of Ingarstone, not free to cross the hideous barrier that divided him from the queenly Beatrice.

Utterly lonely, utterly depressed, he quitted the justice-room and wandered he knew not whither.

What did it matter?

What could the present, what could the future be to him, haunted as it was by the black shadow of the irredeemable past?

Suppose he proved himself innocent of this one terrible crime, or suppose, which was more likely, he simply escaped the penalty of it by implicating another, what was his position? The fatal secret of his life was known. The story which he had often thought he could die rather than tell was told. By this time she had heard it. By this time she knew him as a convicted felon, a companion of thieves and vagabonds, an accomplice in the escape of a prisoner, and the receiver of stolen property, of which he had asked her acceptance. Innocent or guilty of the capital offence, whichever he might be pronounced, thenceforth all hope of a reinstatement in her regard was gone.

How bitterly did he curse the folly that had brought all this upon him!

But his self-reproaches were as nothing compared to the ever-burning, ever-intensifying feelings of jealousy, hatred, and revenge, which were springing up in his heart against Ormond Redgrave.

They might have been unjust. He had a dim sense of that, a consciousness that all the time he might be doing his rival a deep wrong. But what then? when was ever passion just? when did ever a man weigh accurately in his own soul the merits of a question as between himself and his rival?

Was it not enough that but for Redgrave all that was now known to his eternal discredit might have been buried in oblivion? Was it not enough, more than enough that his denouncer was now, at that very moment, building up his happiness on the ruin of that he had so wantonly destroyed?

Andrew Nolan wandered away to a solitary spot, where the low, sweeping branches of gnarled oaks blotted out the sky, and where the fronds of thickly clustered ferns thrived in the gloom.

Upon those ferns he threw himself, as one "taking the measure of an unmade grave," and burying his face in his arms, gave himself up to the thoughts that maddened him. The spot commanded a view of Ingarstone. He could see as the dusk of evening closed in, how the lights glimmered in the windows, and his face burned with fire as he knew that they were thinking of him, talking of him, and that Redgrave was taking advantage of his absence to press his suit with Beatrice.

'By heaven!' he shrieked out in mortal agony, starting to his feet, 'she shall never be his!'

'Never!'

He thought it was an echo, so accurately was the word repeated close to his ear. But when he turned and strove to pierce the gloom of the oak-shadows, it seemed to him that he was not alone.

'I repeat—she shall never be his,' said a voice, which he instantly recognized as that he had heard in the prison-cell. 'But you're too impatient, Nolan.'

'Impatient!' cried the other, 'who are you, who busy yourself with my affairs, and presume to lecture me on my feelings?'

'Come, come!' replied the voice, which had a perpetual sneer in its tone, 'you're perturbed. Not unnaturally; but you are. You forget our last meeting. You forget that I promised you, revenge—revenge on this haughty Redgrave.'

'But why do you offer this? And what form will it take?' asked Nolan.

'No matter for my reasons,' was the reply, 'and as to what I have promised, do not fear, but that it will be fulfilled to your utmost satisfaction. He has denounced you! He has sought your ruin! He has supplanted you with Ingarstone's daughter! Well, heaven is just, as he shall live to feel it!'

'But when, when?' demanded the youth, impatiently.

'When his pride is in the full wantonness of its guilt—when the cup of his happiness is overflowing—when life presents to him its rosier aspect—when the sunshine of prosperity brightens around him—when the path before his feet is strewn with flowers—when hope and love and gratified ambition and exultant passion all combine to render earth a paradise to his enjoyment—then—'

'What then?'

'Then will come the moment of our triumph, and of his doom!'

Prompted by a burning curiosity, the young man put out his hands with intent to clutch at the speaker, whose deep, impassioned voice seemed to echo through his very soul. But he was disappointed.

As a shadow through the trees, as a wandering breath among the ferns, the mysterious being, who, ever he was, had disappeared as he had come—without a sound.

(To be continued.)

A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.—A party of tin streamers who are excavating on a place called Gos Moor, in Cornwall, have discovered a layer of hazel nuts at a depth of 24 feet from the surface, and lying beneath four feet of ground that had previously been excavated. The shells of the nuts, of which there were many thousands, were quite perfect, though black, but they contained no kernels.

ABERDEEN.—THE QUEEN'S STATUE.—We understand that during the recent sojourn of the Court at Balmoral, the movement set a-going in the city and county of Aberdeen, to erect a statue of the Queen in that city, was brought under the notice of her Majesty by Dr. Robertson, and that her Majesty most graciously expressed her satisfaction with the proposal—the more especially as it had originated with the working classes. We understand, also, that her Majesty signified at the same time her willingness to give the sculptor a sitting when she revisits Balmoral during the autumn.

GARIBALDI AND THE ITALIAN FREEMASONS.—A letter from Naples of the 30th ult. says:—'Garibaldi is chiefly occupied at the present moment with the unification of Italian Freemasonry, now divided into two rites—the Scotch and the French. The former has its centre at Palermo, where it was established when that city was occupied by the English, and the second at Turin, which is near the French frontier. On the 25th the principal members of the two rites went to Ischia, and held council with Garibaldi, who is Grand Master of the Italian Freemasons of the French rite. It seems that no arrangement has yet been found possible, the resistance chiefly proceeding from the lodge of the Scotch rite, which urge the adoption of their usage on the ground of greater antiquity and higher authority. The consequence is that the meeting of the representatives of all the lodges, which was to be held at Palermo, with Garibaldi as president, will not take place, unless an understanding, which appears little probable, should meanwhile be realized.'



THE STEPMOTHER.

CHAPTER XI.

The fairest mask put on.
Hides not the wrinkles writ by treacherous thoughts.
Hurd.

We must now change the scene to a stately mansion. It stood in a fashionable suburban locality, and had a very imposing appearance, having bay windows opening on a beautiful lawn, a hot-house and green-house in the rear, and being in every way large and commodious. Commanding as was the exterior of the edifice, the interior was far more gorgeous.

On entering the wide hall from the marble steps, a suite of splendid rooms were revealed, consisting of drawing-rooms, parlours, and library, all lofty and handsome, and possessing a foreign look. The floors were covered with Persian carpets; the chandeliers that hung from the ceilings were ornamented in strange designs; the walls were painted with Indian scenes, comprising forest-jungles, tiger-hunts, white elephants, with their native riders, and gorgeous flowers and foliage peculiar to India. The light that came through the plate-glass windows was mellowed by the golden-hued silk that draped them. The library was lined with shelves filled with books in illuminated and uniform binding—many of them Hindoo works—and strange prints and maps, with charts and curiosities, loaded the mosaic tables.

But all these singularities were less noticeable than the proprietor of the mansion himself, who was seated in a warm dressing-room, lounging in a quaintly-carved easy-chair.

He was a large and portly gentleman, about fifty years of age, with long, iron-grey hair, an intensely yellow complexion, and a benevolent expression of countenance. There was a weary look on his face, and deep lines were graven about his eyes and mouth, that showed that, rich as he evidently was, he was not a stranger to sorrow. He was smoking a hookah, and seemed to be wrapped in thought.

"Another day, eh?" muttered this personage, yawning and rubbing his eyes. "Well, I suppose I must manage to live through it. What a dull life though! No family—no friends—no one to leave my money to—nothing—"

He touched a bell.

As if by magic, a door opened, and a tall and solemn-looking Hindoo, with a shiny brown face, appeared before him, with a bow, at once expressive of affection and reverence.

"I must have more life, Kayder," said the proprietor

[THE NAROB GIVES MRS. WILLIS A STRANGE RECEPTION.]

of the stately mansion. "You may make me a tepid bath of the white wine."

"Yes, your excellency," was the servant's response, with another profound obeisance, and he withdrew.

"No letters—no visits, except from charity hunters," resumed his excellency. "Really a dull existence."

He threw himself back in his chair, smoking dreamily for a few moments, and the Hindoo then reappeared, announcing that the bath was ready.

"Very good, Kayder; you may see to my breakfast, and have it taken to the library."

He arose with a weary sort of mien as the servant vanished, and gathered closer around his form an Indian cashmere dressing-gown, embroidered in gold, with lions and tigers, bamboo groves and bungalows, and various other Oriental objects. The bath-room, to which he now proceeded, was immediately beyond the adjoining bed-chamber, and was fitted up in a style corresponding with that of the other apartments. Large demijohns of rare wines were ranged along one side of the room, and from one of the dimensions of several gallons, the Hindoo had just poured a part of the bath that, in its snowy marble basin, now awaited his master's service.

After bathing and dressing, his excellency proceeded to the library, where he seated himself, falling into a reverie of a somewhat sombre character, as was attested by the melancholy expression of his features.

The Hindoo soon made his appearance, bowing and announcing that his excellency's breakfast was ready.

"Very well—I will take it!"

The servant moved noiselessly to the door, made a gesture to a fellow-servant of the same colour and nationality as himself, and the latter entered, bearing a tray loaded with steaming Mocha coffee, steak, toast and other refreshments, while Kayder returned to his place, displaying a morning paper and producing a pair of scissors.

"Ah, the paper," said his excellency. "I am not well this morning, and cannot be burdened with unnecessary news. Cut out, as usual, all the politics, murders, robberies, and so forth."

The keen eyes of the Hindoo ran over the journal, and his scissors made numerous holes in it, removing passages which he knew would pain or weary the sensitive feelings of his excellency.

When he had finished, only two or three little slips of printed matter remained of the sheet, and these he handed to his master.

"Very good," was his excellency's comment. "You are dismissed for half-an-hour."

The Hindoo bowed profoundly and withdrew,

carrying away the rejected fragments of the morning journal, while his excellency commenced his lunch, at the same time perusing the news. Matters went on quietly enough for a few minutes, but the reader then started, reddened, and shouted:

"Ha, hi, Kayder!"

The Hindoo rushed into the room.

"Here, take away this dog! How could you be so careless? You've shocked me to death. A mad dog biting a child in the leg—dying in convulsions—away with it!"

He extended the slip containing the obnoxious paragraph, and Kayder hastened, in shame and confusion, to bear it from the apartment.

The returned East Indian—for such he was, as was attested by all the surroundings—finished his repast in silence, and then turned an inquiring eye towards the well-filled shelves of the apartment.

"I'm tired of reading," he muttered. "The most of these books are really too dry."

He wheeled his chair to the nearest shelf, and amused himself for several hours in looking over atlases and books, occasionally pausing to smoke his amber-mouthed hookah.

At length, when he had grown tired of this occupation, he wheeled himself into the recess of a bay window, drew the curtains, pulled his smoking-cap further over his face, and composed himself for a nap. He had hardly settled himself in an easy position and lost himself to his surroundings, when he was roused by the ringing of the door-bell.

"Kayder!" he exclaimed, opening his eyes and finding, as he expected, that his servant had stolen noiselessly into the room to watch his slumbers. "Don't let that fellow at the door send me any pitiful message—any tale of wretchedness! Don't let him in! Is your purse empty?"

"No, your excellency," was the reply, as the Hindoo touched a long silken purse dangling from a girdle at his waist. "Plenty of silver yet!"

"Don't be stingy, Kayder—and now go! There's the bell again! Dear, dear!" he added, as the Hindoo disappeared, "I shall have to get that bell taken down. It's as much as my life is worth to have such a jar just as I'm about to sleep!"

The servant proceeded to the door and opened it, finding himself face to face with Mrs. Willis and her daughter.

The elder lady took a step into the hall, and said: "Is—is the gentleman at home?"

"His excellency is at home," was the reply, in very good English. "If you want cash for charity, he gives it through me!"

As Kayder spoke, he took occasion to jingle the silver in his purse.

"No, you are mistaken," said Mrs. Willis, throwing back her head. "Give this to your master, and tell him that I have important business with him."

As she said this, she handed the Hindoo her card. The servant objected, saying that his excellency never received visitors, but the two women entered the hall, and he was obliged to carry the bit of paste-board to his master.

"How dare you, Kayder?" ejaculated his master as the Hindoo entered his presence. "Don't bring me a card; send the man away—unless—ah, yes, I expect a visit," he added, with sudden interest. "Give me the card, quick."

Kayder did so.

"Mrs. Willis?" said his excellency, as he read it. "Is her husband with her?"

"No, your excellency, the two ladies are alone."

"Show them in."

"Yes, your excellency," said Kayder, and he glided from the room to obey the command.

During his absence Mrs. Willis and Elinor had entered the drawing-room, examined the furniture, and estimated the wealth of the East Indian as being beyond computation. They returned to the hall in time to meet Kayder's suspicious glances, and were conducted by him to his master.

The meeting between his excellency and the two women was somewhat singular.

The proprietor of the mansion lay back in his chair, his face shaded by his cap and tassel, and his form concealed by his gorgeous gown, while his searching eyes seemed to read the characters of his visitors at a single glance. His next movement was that of a hunted crab—a general shrinking and drawing in of his whole frame.

Mrs. Willis had returned his gaze with interest, besides scrutinizing his apparel and surroundings, but the perceptible shrinkage mentioned recalled her from her rudeness.

"Be seated, ladies," said their host, waving his thin, yellow hand. "Your name, I believe, is Willis," and he referred to the card he held. "Ah, yes, Willis."

Mrs. Willis shook out the folds of her heavy, black silk dress, and fluttered her perfumed mourning handkerchief as she seated herself, and her daughter did the same.

The elder lady had powdered her two ruddy cheeks, toning them down to an interesting paleness, but her really handsome daughter had left hers as brightly red as nature made them, by way of contrast to her mother.

Considering herself irresistible, Mrs. Willis repeated, not without surprise:

"I am Mrs. John Willis."

His excellency started and looked from one to the other of his visitors, while a look of disappointment mantled his face. The next moment it was as expressionless as if carved from stone.

"Mrs. John Willis," he repeated. "Is your husband with you?"

"My poor husband," sighed Mrs. Willis. "I will tell you about him. The day your note came to him he died—died of consumption—and without being able to read a line of it. I opened it after his death, and was impressed with the idea that 'the nabob' was his old friend George Moreland. If so, let me assure you that you were ever kindly and lovingly remembered by my poor husband."

The yellow countenance of the East Indian had become fairly livid during the period occupied by Mrs. Willis's speech, as if he were suffering under some sternly repressed emotion, but not a line about his face quivered. A moment more and he appeared to shrink still further into his summer gown.

The faithful Kayder, whose eyes were quickened by affection, was the only one to perceive this token of feeling, and he hastened to bring his master a cooling drink.

"You are a widow, then?" said his excellency, his keen eyes again seeming to search the woman through and through. "And this is your daughter—Miss Willis?"

"No. She is my daughter, but by a former husband. She is Miss Strope."

"Indeed!" said their host, thoughtfully. "I think I have heard of a Mr. Willis, but I also heard that he was engaged to marry a Miss Mary Lee, but that was years ago, and that Mr. Willis may not have been your husband."

"Oh, yes, he was," said Mrs. Willis, eagerly. "The first wife of my husband was named Mary Lee, and he had a child by her whom he named Esther, after the wife of his friend, George Moreland. I married Mr. Willis about six years ago."

"And this daughter, Esther," said his excellency, in his calm, unmovable tones, although the lividness of his countenance had increased, "where is she?"

"She is at home," said Mrs. Willis, annoyed

at her own mention of her step-daughter. "She is, unfortunately, very different from Elinor. In fact, I have trouble with her in many ways, that my motherly love for her would prevent me from mentioning except to one who was a dear friend of my husband, and who, may I not hope, will be a dear friend of his wife and family?"

His excellency sipped a glass of sugared water without replying, and Mrs. Willis continued, looking modestly down at the floor.

"It was the wish of my beloved husband that I should return to London and introduce the dear girls into society this very winter, in order to divert them and myself from our excessive grief, and his wishes are now sacred laws to me. Much as I abhor the thoughts of entering fashionable society, I must do my duty to my children. 'May I not hope to find you a frequent visitor at our house?'"

"I do not go out at all, madam," said his excellency, politely, "and I receive no visitors. I shall be pleased, however, to have you and your daughter call often, and bring with you your husband's child."

Mrs. Willis remained a little while longer, endeavouring by every artful device to discover the name of the East Indian, and one moment half certain that he was George Moreland, and the next moment thoroughly convinced that he was not. In either case, she decided that he was the most eccentric man she had ever met.

At length she rose and took her leave, sweeping out of the apartment, followed by her daughter, and was accompanied to the door by the polite Hindoo.

The carriage was in waiting, and the ladies gave the order for home.

"I declare, Elinor," said Mrs. Willis, with a contracting forehead, "I am completely mystified. Is that man George Moreland or not? If he is, why didn't he say so? If he is not, why didn't he deny writing the letter, and deny being Moreland?"

"He is a complete mystery, mother!" said Elinor. "Part of the time I fancied he and Harry were exact counterparts, and again I could see no resemblance. But one thing is certain—he is immensely wealthy, and, as you say, a bachelor! I'll take the risk of his being Harry's father, and secure Harry the first thing. You know I always liked him."

"And I," said Mrs. Willis, "will secure that nabob, be he whom he will, if it be in the power of mortal woman to captivate him. And yet I wish I knew who he is. Of course, I could not hunt him down at first sight. We must see him again."

CHAPTER XII.

The spider's most attenuated thread

Is cord, is cable, to man's tender tie

On earthly bliss: it breaks at every breeze.

Young.

POOR Esther! What a change a brief fortnight had wrought in her hopes and fortunes. She was peering to and fro in her little room at an early hour of the morning, waiting longingly for daylight. The paleness of her face, and the thinness of her form, would have suggested what she had suffered during the recent period of hope deferred, but could not have revealed the fulness of her misery. We all know, or can nearly imagine, what such a life is—this waiting for footsteps that do not come, for smiles that are one's sunlight, for words that are one's music!

As is almost always the case in such circumstances, Esther had considered almost every possible cause for her lover's silence except the right one. Such a thing as the interception of his letters by Pierre Russell, or any one else, had never occurred to her. What explanation of Harry's silence could she cherish? If suddenly taken ill, he could have sent her a line or message by a friend. If in receipt of her letters, he might have written. And so the days and nights had worn away in incessant tortures, and now her darkness and desolation were greater than ever.

"Oh, what has become of him?" was the wail unceasingly arising from her heart, as she thus paced back and forth in her room. "Why does he not write? What can be the mystery of this horrible silence?"

It is easy to imagine the long series of explanations she gave herself, and we need not record them. To one in such an agonised situation it is as natural to cherish hope against hope as it is for a drowning man to catch at straws. Suffice it to say that all the comfort she could derive from her pleasantest theories was little. And so she continued her slow and uncertain walk, now praying and uttering frenzied wails, and many a time weeping as though her heart was breaking.

The dull, heavy hours of the early morning were thus worn away, and the struggling gleams of a cloudy sun came into her room.

Esther finally received a summons to breakfast, and she mechanically obeyed it, although she could eat nothing.

At the usual hour for the children's morning airing with their governess, Esther proceeded to her employer, and obtained half-a-day to herself, her white face pleading more earnestly than any words could have done.

She returned to her own room, dressed herself in her richest silk, donned a bonnet and cloak, completing a ladylike and elegant street-costume, and then she quietly left the house.

She had resolved to seek Harry, and learn from his own lips the explanation of his silence. She had thought of this measure before, but had put it off as long as possible, hoping that all would be made right without it.

Perhaps she was needlessly sensitive about seeking Harry, but her changed fortunes were calculated to leave her open to insidious thoughts, and it was not till her position was simply unendurable, that she had fully determined on this step.

Never before had the world seemed so dark and desolate to Esther, as on that morning, which was nearly as lowering as her fortunes. She had passed half the night on her feet, not able to sleep, and she now walked with uncertain steps, seeing no one and hearing nothing, intent only on proving the truth and fidelity of the one whose love was more than life to her.

How the memories of her past came over her, blending with the miseries of her present! The latter all dark and chaotic—the former clear and distinct as the sunlight!

She recalled the goodness of her father—the years she had passed with Harry—his many noble actions—and again her hopes got the better of her fears, bringing a temporary relief to her soul.

"There must be some cause for Harry's silence," she thought. "He would not desert me so cruelly—never! I have done wrong—to give way to all these anxieties. I ought to have hastened to him days ago. He will explain everything—I shall see how much he loves me, and how much he, too, has suffered; and I shall again be happy!"

Ah, woman's heart! What is it but a fathomless ocean, now surging and tossing in darkness, now calm and sparkling in the sunshine?

As the pleasant reveries we have recorded passed through Esther's mind, she quickened her steps in her agitation, almost to a run.

The sight of a new and strange name, in the place of the one she was expecting to see, dispelled the hopes she had desperately cherished. Starting, and shading her eyes, she looked at the number repeatedly, and then at the numbers above and below it.

"This is surely the place," she thought, "the old number, but a new name—the place where father and I so often called on Harry, when we came to the City together."

With a sudden sickness of heart she turned her steps towards the entrance of the building, her face growing whiter at the increasing signs of new occupants. The first person she encountered, or rather whose attention was attracted to her pale face, was the porter, a man she had never seen before, who was coming out of the entrance with several bundles of goods under his arms.

"Is—Mr. Moreland in?" she faltered.

The man paused and regarded her, his countenance evincing surprise as well as sympathy.

"Moreland, Miss?" he said.

"Of the firm of Drummond and Co.," Esther added.

"He's a junior partner!"

"Oh, ah!" exclaimed the man. "Why, don't you know, Miss, that the firm of Drummond and Co. has failed, through the rascality of one of the partners—broken up and gone?"

The blow was as crushing to Esther as it was unexpected.

"And you know nothing of the whereabouts of Mr. Moreland?" she soon asked of the porter, who seemed touched by her distress.

"Nothing, miss, I'm sorry to say. One or two young men of the late firm have been here once or twice for an hour or two since we took possession, but I do not remember to have heard the name of the gentleman you mention. Wait a moment, ma'am, and I'll inquire of Mr. Capps."

He withdrew to the interior, and Esther saw him conversing with a bald-headed old gentleman, the head of the new firm. She saw some glances directed to herself, and the next moment the new proprietor came forward, bowing to her and saying:

"I am sorry to say, miss, that we do not know what has become of Mr. Moreland or his partners."

He again bowed and retired as abruptly as he had come, while the porter, who had lingered, caught the attention of the half-distracted girl, and said:

"You might call again, miss, in a few days, and perhaps Mr. Moreland will have been here again, in which case—"

Esther interrupted him by turning away. Her heart was so full of anguish that she could not immediately speak, but she finally murmured:

"Mr. Moreland has my address, so that I need not leave it. Should you see him, however, please tell him that Miss Willis has been here, not having received any letters, and she is anxious to see him."

She then withdrew, and started for home, wild with her grief and desolation, and blinded by her tears.

"It's terrible that all these changes were kept from me!" she murmured to herself. "Where can he be? Why has he not written?"

We have no heart to recall the horrible doubts and suspicions which here assumed a positive place in her thoughts. Poor forlorn heart, what could she think? Which way could she turn for relief? He who vowed everything to her sainted father—he who was bound to her by the most sacred of ties and promises—he had gone, wholly vanished out of the circle of her daily life, and had given her no word or sign of his movements. She struggled against her torturing suspicions, but vainly—she could not repulse them. Alas for the darkness that had now settled permanently upon her!

CHAPTER XIII.

What sorrow claims acquaintance at my hand
That I yet know not? *Shakespeare.*

PIERRE RUSSELL returned to his aunt's mansion the evening after his pretended visit, admitted himself with his latch-key, and proceeded to the drawing-room, which he found handsomely lighted, and occupied only by his aunt and cousin.

He was received with cordiality, no traces of the recent disappointment in not finding the will among Pierre's effects being visible in the countenances of either of the two women.

"Did you have a pleasant time, Pierre?" questioned Elinor, settling her bracelets on her white wrists, and scanning the reflection of her handsome face in the full-length mirror opposite.

"Oh, delightful! This place is really home-like, aunt," he added, carelessly. "It's a nice thing to be rich, isn't it?"

"I have a favour to ask of you, Pierre," said Mrs. Willis, disregarding his question. "Now that we are rich and established, I want society. We shall, of course, see something of the old business friends of Mr. Willis, but I want to launch out on the full tide of fashion, and be somebody in the gay world. You must manage, with your splendid abilities and your position here, to fill the house with fashionable people. The fact is, Pierre," and Mrs. Willis's tone grew confidential, "I have sent Elinor to boarding-school ever since she was three years old, with a prophetic view to this hour. She is handsome and accomplished, and will do you credit. By the way," she added, with an attempt at carelessness, "bring Harry Moreland with you very often."

"Harry Moreland!" ejaculated Russell. "Why, he's failed!"

"I read the bankruptcy of his firm in the paper, but I don't care for that. Make him come! To tell you the truth, Pierre, Elinor has taken a fancy to him, and of course I can refuse her nothing."

Pierre Russell looked from one to the other of his relatives, and mentally decided that there was something in this scheme concerning Harry Moreland that would be worthy his attention.

"Very well," he said. "I have kept sight of Moreland, and know where he is. I'll call upon him to-morrow, and press him to visit you."

The relatives conversed awhile longer, and Pierre then went up to his own chamber, lighted the six jets of the splendid chandelier, and proceeded to measure the exact position of the coat sleeve lying on the trunk.

"Just as I expected," he said, with a sardonic smile, after comparing the measure with that taken before his absence. "The feathers are swept close to the trunk, I see. I wonder how they felt at not finding it, and what game they'll try next in the hope of discovering the whereabouts of the true will?"

He smiled again as he proceeded to lock the door and apply a patent fastener; and after smoking awhile, retired for the night.

He arose at an early hour the next morning, rang for his breakfast, which he had brought to his room, and after performing an unexceptionable toilet, left the house.

"Esther will soon be calling upon Moreland," he thought, "or will make an effort to find him, if I may judge by the wildness of her last letter, and it will be well for me to draw my snares closer this very morning. She goes out at nine o'clock with the children, I have observed, and then will be my time."

Turning into the street, the scheming villain sauntered up and down the vicinity of Esther's abode, and finally beheld her come out alone, as recorded.

"Her tears have washed the country roses from her cheeks," he soliloquised, "and the wildness of her eyes shows plainly that she has begun to doubt the

love of Harry Moreland. If so, the rest will be easy. But what an elegant and aristocratic-looking woman she is. She herself, let alone her fortune, is well worth all the trouble I can take in the matter. She's either going to Moreland's or to the post-office. Fortunately, I've a look-out at each place for her; and so, while she's gone, I'll pay that long contemplated visit to her employer. The time has come for that particular move."

While thus musing, Russell had followed Esther far enough to feel assured that she was really going to Harry's, and he soon turned back and hastened to the mansion from which she had come, and rung the bell. He was admitted by a servant, who ushered him into the drawing-room, and went for his mistress. She soon appeared, and Russell arose, bowing and saying with his usual easy grace,

"Pardon me, madam, for my intrusion, but you have a young woman in your employ as governess?"

The lady seemed somewhat astonished at this address, but the elegant appearance of her visitor caused her to treat him with respect and politeness, and she replied.

"I employ a governess for my children, sir. But what interest can so simple a fact have for a stranger?"

"Simply the interest that any man of honour would have in preserving innocent and guileless children from association with the unworthy," said Russell. "It is my painful duty to inform you, madam, that the young woman in your employ is not exactly the person to whom your children should be entrusted."

"But," said the lady, anxiously, "I engaged her on the recommendation of a young merchant of my acquaintance, Mr. Moreland, a partner in a well-known firm. Had she been bad, he would hardly have recommended her so warmly as he did."

"Ah!" returned Russell, with well-acted admiration, "it does me good, madam, to meet with one so unsuspecting as yourself. This Moreland is doubtless no better than any other young man of his age, and, to be frank with you, he is the lover to whom I have indirectly referred!"

Russell's manner conveyed even more accusations against Esther than his words.

"A lover!" the lady gasped, flushing.

The visitor quietly unfolded a journal, and extended it towards her, pointing out a certain paragraph in it as he responded:

"The way of the world, you know. The house you refer to has come to a rather bad end, as you may see by this paragraph, a senior partner having run away with all its funds, and these misfortunes have suggested, I suppose, to Mr. Moreland, who was in reality a head-clerk or something of the kind, to find a place for the lady, he being no longer able to support her. In fact—"

"I understand you, sir," interrupted the mistress of the house, red with anger. "I had no suspicions that they were disreputable characters; but I might have known it. As sly as the creature's been, I have not failed to notice how greatly she's been troubled by something since she has been here. Perhaps the fellow has taken it into his head to improve this opportunity of getting rid of her, for he hasn't been near her."

"Exactly," said Russell.

"But I cannot thank you enough, sir, for your kindness," the lady added. "Permit me to know to whom I am indebted for this invaluable service."

"With pleasure. Of course I do not wish to be mentioned in connection with this affair, but I wish you to be entirely certain of the unfortunate woman's unworthiness, and am sure that the ladies of my family will gladly give you further particulars, to save you from her impositions."

The lady renewed her thanks, saying that she was already fully satisfied, while Russell drew a card from his pocket with an assumed name and address, and presented it, saying:

"Do not blame yourself, madam, for your very natural credulity. Your good heart, influenced by her youth and extreme beauty, prompted you to take her into the bosom of your family; and if I have been the means of depriving one so utterly unworthy as the young woman in question of encouragement in wrongdoing, I am satisfied."

The lady thanked him warmly, expressing the utmost detestation of the innocent girl Russell had so shamelessly traduced, and, having noted his assumed address as being extremely fashionable, gave implicit credence to his insinuations.

Russell soon took his leave, his villainous heart exulting in his success, and rejoicing over the storm that awaited the return of the desolate orphan.

"She will find that Moreland's gone no one knows where," he thought; "and the Pharisaical dame will turn her out of doors when she gets home again. In anticipation of such an event, I will have a porter placed in the vicinity, with instructions how to act."

Accordingly, he picked out a man suitable for his

purpose, and concluded his instructions to him thus:

"The fact is," he said, "we've had a little family dispute at our house, and I presume, my sister will run away, and take her trunks with her. Now, if such is her project, she'll see you near, and engage your services. Once the trunks in your possession, bring them to me, and I will give you twenty pounds."

He gave the porter a card containing his late hotel address, where he had left a part of his baggage.

"I'll do it, and many thanks to your honour," said the fellow eagerly. "But suppose she don't hire me —"

"I'll pay all the same. She'll want you, however; have no fears on that score. It's a mere family squabble, you know, and we've only to make her a little trouble to cure her rage and bring her to her senses. You'd better pass to and fro near the house, keeping your eyes on it, and in this way you cannot miss her. Of course, in case of success, I shall be at the hotel."

With a few additional directions to the man, Russell saw him to the scene of his proposed task, and took up the nearest and most convenient watching place for himself, muttering:

"The trap's ready—now for the game!"

(To be continued.)

THE SAVOY CHAPEL.

THE Queen has graciously taken upon herself the cost of restoring the ruined chapel, and Professor Smirke, R.A., has surveyed the ruins with reference to the probable cost. In 1843 her Majesty, as "Duchess of Lancaster," did the same thing. George III., according to a tablet still on the outside of the church, paid the cost of its repair in 1826 and 1830, as George I. had done in 1721.

Unfortunately, however, all the Queen's horses and all the Queen's men cannot put Humpty-dumpty again as he was before; and the disaster should lead to increased carelessness in respect of other remnants of the past.

Little remains but the walls. Most of the monuments are destroyed, including that of Dryden's "Vestal Virgin of the Skies," Anne Killigrew, "A Grace for beauty, and a Muse for wit." What has become of the Gawain Douglas brass we did not notice.

The history of the Savoy Palace is curious. The founder of it was Peter de Savoy, brother of Boniface, Archbishop of Canterbury, and uncle of Eleanor, Queen of Henry III. This Peter was knighted publicly in Westminster Abbey (1245), and was created Earl of Savoy and Richmond.

Many vicissitudes happened to this building. It next became the property of the friars of Mountjoy, and then Eleanor purchased it again for her son Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, father of the earl who was beheaded for treason in the reign of Edward II. John of Gaunt married the daughter and heiress of the Duke of Lancaster, and he became tenant of the Savoy Palace.

The battle of Poitiers (1356) resulted, we all know, in the defeat of King John of France. On the 24th of April, 1357, the Black Prince rode through London with King John of France, and the captive king lived in the palace, where the English king and the prince "went frequently to see him."

King John returned to his country in hopes of making terms of peace; but, being unsuccessful, he returned to England, and died in the Savoy in 1364. The Savoy Palace next became a hospital in the time of Henry VII. In the reign of his successor there was an establishment of a master and four chaplains, and then the hospital was suppressed after a time. Of this institution all traces are swept away except the chapel which has just been destroyed by fire.

The chapel was built in 1505. The ceiling, which has been entirely destroyed, was the most striking feature of the interior. It was wholly of oak and pear-tree, and divided in 138 quatre-foil panels, each enriched with a carved ornament either of sacred or historical significance. The panels numbered twenty-three in the length of the chapel and six in its width.

Ten of the ranges had each a shield in the centre, presenting in high relief some feature or emblem of the passion and death of the Saviour, and all devised and arranged in a style of which there are many examples in sacred edifices of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The panels throughout the rest of the ceiling contained bearings or badges indicating the various families from which the royal lineage was derived, and more particularly the alliances of the House of Lancaster, each panel being surrounded by a wreath richly blazoned and tinted with the livery colours of the different families. The various devices in the ceiling

ing are minutely explained in a published work by Mr. Willement.

The altar-piece (designed by Sir Reginald Bray) and the large stained-glass window surmounting it, have been entirely destroyed. "This window was glazed at the cost of the congregation, in honour of God, and in gratitude to our Queen Victoria."

Fuller, the church historian, was once lecturer at the chapel; and Cowley, the poet, was a candidate for the appointment. Wither, the poet, and William Hilton, the painter, were buried there.

In early times, a right of sanctuary was claimed for the Savoy. A letter to Lord Burleigh in 1581, as to an outbreak of rogues, says:

"The chief nurseries of all these evill people is the Savoy, and the brick kilnes near Islington."

THE ENGAGEMENT RING; OR, PEARLS AND GARNETS.

CHAPTER I.

It was a pistol-shot that rang out sharply upon the night air, startling the ears of the listeners, and a cry of anguish followed it. Could murder be doing in the streets of the great city? Then came the sound of hurrying footsteps, and the eager cries of men alarmed. A crowd soon gathered, even at that late hour, around two men at the corner of a street where the pale moon cast down her brightest beams. Two men—one lying prostrate upon the pavement, the other bending over him. For what purpose the excited crowd did not stop to question.

"Seize the murderer!" was the general exclamation as they roughly grasped the stooping man.

"Murderer!" he echoed, in utter amazement, struggling with his captors. "I am not his murderer. He who fired the pistol was—"

"Who? who?" was the interrogation from a dozen throats.

"Unknown to me," continued the one they had so unceremoniously seized, completing his sentence with considerable embarrassment.

"A likely story!"

"Any one could say the same!"

"We've got the right man, sure enough!"

These, and similar exclamations, were bandied about among the excited bystanders.

"I am unarmed—I never carried a weapon in my life," cried the accused, indignantly. "Search me, and satisfy yourselves."

The men who held him were not slow to avail themselves of the offer. The object of their scrutiny bore the indignity calmly, but with ill-concealed disdain. The moonbeams shone strongly upon his features as he stood the central figure of this strange group of men, who had been conjured, as it were, like spirits from their haunts, into the pale moonlight of the quiet street by the pistol-shot.

He was quite a young man, twenty-three perhaps—plainly attired in a dark suit, with a fair, broad brow, a long, straight nose, wavy brown hair, clear grey eyes, and thin, nervous lips, the upper one shaded by a small moustache. Nothing in his appearance proclaimed the murderer; but men may be killed in hot blood by those who bear no brand of Cain upon their white foreheads.

The search was made; it was as he had said—he was unarmed. Some one suggested that the pistol had been thrown away. An instant search was instituted. Nothing of the kind could be found. They now permitted the accused to tell his story. It was very brief.

Alarmed by the report of the pistol, he had hastened to the spot, and found the prostrate man. While bending over him in order to ascertain if life remained, he had been seized as described.

"Surely I know you," broke in one of the party, suddenly; "you are Perry Ellwood."

"Yes, Morris Willard," answered the accused, bitterly. "I do not wonder that you did not recognize me before; adversity changes friends into strangers. I know you—I know you all—James, Bentwood, Scanlin, Peveril, all, all!" He folded his arms, and regarded them disdainfully.

"Perry Ellwood!" they all exclaimed, in wonder. He did know them all; and he had been their school-fellow, playmate in childhood, but never the associate of the dissipation which marked their riper years.

"And the murdered man—perhaps another friend?" cried Bentwood, jeeringly.

More wonder—more astonishment—the face was known to all. It was that of a man who went by the name of Curly Boyce—a gambler by profession.

"Ah!" exclaimed James, suddenly, turning to Ellwood. "This looks suspicious. You quarrelled with this man a day or two ago—I remember his telling me of it."

"I did not quarrel with him. I had some words with him, I grant you. He was leading young Adare

to ruin, and I warned him if he did not desist, I would take measures to compel him."

"Why should you interfere in the affairs of Adare?" demanded James.

"Oh, don't you know?" interposed Bentwood, before Perry could speak. "He is going to marry Adare's sister, the pretty Orione."

"Not if Willis Bond can prevent it," said Peveril, with a sneering laugh; "he has become enamoured of the 'fair one with the golden locks,' and is determined to possess her, as he undoubtedly will, for he is as rich as a Jew, and money, you know, always carries the day."

A spasm passed over Perry's frame; his hands were tightly clenched together; he made a movement forward as if to strike the scoffers to the earth, but, by a mighty effort, he controlled himself, and his emotion passed by unheeded, leaving him rigid, motionless, with a deathly pallor on his fair white brow.

His companions now turned their attention to the body. It might be a case of assassination for the sake of plunder. It was not, for they found Boyce's watch and pocket-book upon his person, and, strangest of all, a revolver with every chamber charged. He must have been shot without any warning, as he had not attempted to use his means of defence. His wound was in the throat. As they raised his head to inspect it, a faint sigh issued from his lips.

"The man lives!" shouted Bentwood.

Perry shuddered, and cast a glance of alarm at the wounded man.

"Now we shall know who did it!"

"Lift his head and give him air!"

"If he can only speak—ask the name of his assassin!"

Such were the hurried ejaculations of the young men as they raised the dying man, for such he undoubtedly was, in their arms.

"Do you know me, Boyce?" asked Bentwood, as the sufferer unclosed his eyes and gazed vacantly around him.

"Yes," came very faintly, after a pause, from the wounded man's lips.

"Who shot you?"

Boyce's look again wandered 'till it rested upon Perry's pale face, and then his eyes brightened into animation.

"Did he?" asked Bentwood, following the direction of his glance, and pointing to Perry.

"No," answered Boyce, faintly, but decidedly.

"Who did, then?"

Boyce coughed, and the blood bubbled to his lips; his strength was going fast. He raised his head, beseechingly as it seemed, as if asking Perry Ellwood to speak the words he could not; but Perry answered not, though those who stood near him observed a strange tremor pervade his frame. The dying man's eyes glared fiercely, like the last flame that leaps from the expiring embers.

"He—knows," he said, in choking accents—gasped, and sank back.

"He is dead," said James, with a shiver.

"And with the murderer's name unspoken."

"But Perry Ellwood knows it—he said so."

"What is it, Perry?" they all chorused.

"You are mistaken," answered Perry, solemnly. "The dying man's appeal was to heaven, not to me. God knows the murderer's name, and in his own good time he will reveal it."

The appearance of the police, who seemed at last to have discovered that something was wrong, put an end to further debate; and, hearing what had transpired, they seized upon Perry Ellwood, and bore him away to answer to the charge of murder.

CHAPTER II.

In the morning-room of a handsome suburban villa, which was almost all that was left to them of the ample fortune which they had inherited from their parents, sat Orione Adare, the girl who had been designated the previous night as "the fair one with golden locks," and well did she deserve that title.

Though her hair might not have been so luxuriant as the celebrated heroine of the fairy tale, yet there was enough to float from brow to shoulders in a golden glory of silken curls.

Her complexion was of purest white, with the faintest tinge of carnation blushing on her cheeks, as delicate in hue as the pink of the sea-shell; and her eyes were of the deepest, darkest blue, gleaming from long lashes with a beseeching look, that seemed to ask for love—a boon readily granted by the susceptible hearts of those who were brought within range of their dangerous artillery.

It must be confessed that Orione was a flirt. That yielding, graceful form—a study for the sculptor in every movement—joined with such a face; the flashing of that lustrous eye; the clear bell-like tones of

that voice; and the silvery laugh, disclosing pearls in a ruby setting, were enough to inflame the coldest heart. To see her was to love. She knew her power and used it—as the humming-bird flits from flower to flower, extracting sweets from all, but keeping ever on the wing.

Once this mercurial creature had paused over the heart of an adorer. She thought herself caught at last, and had designed to fold her restless wings, and fix her fancy on Perry Ellwood. They had grown from childhood together—their had been the love which grows from infancy, and strengthens with our strength.

Many had been their quarrels; often had she cast back his love and sought another, and after a violent flirtation, come back penitent. This was in childhood.

Changes took place in their destinies as they grew in years. Orione and Otto's parents both died, leaving them orphans, but well provided with this world's goods. Perry's father failed, and died, leaving him penniless, with a helpless mother to support. Stripling as he was, and reared in the luxurious indulgence of wealth, he accepted his fate without a murmur, and bent every energy to carve out a path for himself. Fortune never refuses her smiles to the industrious worker. Perry began to study the art of engraving, for which he had a strong taste, and by his own unassisted efforts provided a comfortable home for his aged mother, and was fast securing a competence.

The humble artist, intent upon his labour, never mingled with his former associates, and was almost forgotten by them. Orione was the only summer friend he still retained. He loved her deeply, passionately. She returned that passion, or at least she thought she did, for she suffered him to put an engagement ring upon her finger, and promised to become his wife when he should claim her—an uncertain period, for in the fulness of his love, he would not ask her to share his destiny, until he had laid by enough to secure her against the approach of any privation; for he knew, although she did not, that her brother was fast squandering their fortune in riotous living, and a day might come when the indulged child of wealth would find herself without a home, and at the mercy of relentless creditors.

So he toiled, and she flirted, both in blissful ignorance of each other's actions. There were only certain days in the week when he could spare the time to visit her; and on the occasion of these visits the other beaux were exiled, or if they came, the trusty servant maid—she was devoted to her young mistress—delivered the fashionable "not at home," until at last it became recognised that the "fair one" would not show her "golden locks" on certain days and evenings, and so they wisely kept away. Those evenings were Perry's "hours of heaven," in which he told his plans for the future.

There is some happiness even in being deceived; it is so pleasant to think that there is one heart which beats firmly and truly for you; one eye into which you can gaze with an unshrinking faith; take down the shutters from your soul's windows, and let in the light; no prying eyes to see the skeleton there—nothing but the eye of love, to which you show the inmost chambers—the sacred "mystery of mysteries" that your heart contains; to grasp the fair, soft hand in yours and feel its answering pressure—gentle, reassuring—not the careless, listless touch which answers the demand of courtesy. It is a pleasant dream, but the awakening is like pulling a barbed arrow from the quivering flesh, and the wound rankles after long years are past, though the head be grey and the heart frozen.

All this time we have left the fair Orione gazing out of the window of her morning room, while we, like an old gossip, have made free with her history and disposition, and, perhaps, given the reader a worse opinion of her than she really deserves.

The entrance of Otto Adare, her brother, disturbed her meditations. A slight, effeminate young man, scarcely twenty-two, with the marks of dissipation strongly imprinted upon his handsome features.

"Another night of folly, Otto!" cried Orione, sharply; for, though two years his junior, her intellect was so immeasurably in advance of his, that she played the part of mentor, and he was forced to yield to it, though he did so with exceeding bad grace.

"What were you doing last night?"

Simple as the question was, it affected the young man strangely. He turned very pale, and cast his eyes over his shoulder at the door with a suspicious glance.

"Doing?" he stammered; "what should I be doing? Nothing, of course." And he tried to laugh, but it was a forced and unnatural effort.

"Nothing!" echoed his sister, curling her thin lips with a contemptuous expression. "Nothing! Do you call the ruin of your health—the wasting of your energies—the squandering of your means, nothing? Have you no sense of shame—no spark of manhood

left? Why don't you purchase a commission in the army? You might be of some service to your country—you are none here."

"Oh, I dare say—how long do you think I could stand a military life, with my delicate constitution?" "What has made your constitution so delicate? Nights of reckless dissipation and riotous living. If I were in your place I would become a soldier and try for a new constitution."

"I almost forgot to tell you the news—and strange news it is too—Perry Ellwood is arrested."

"What do you mean?" asked Orione, in surprise, springing quickly from her chair.

"I mean that Perry Ellwood was arrested last night for murder. He shot a man known by the name of Curly Boyce."

The blood receded from Orione's cheeks, and she grasped the back of her chair for support, as the strength seemed to forsake her limbs.

"Perry Ellwood arrested for murder?" she gasped. "Impossible! It cannot be! I know his noble, generous nature too well. He would shrink from the commission of any dishonourable action. He a murderer! It is absurd!"

"Not exactly a murderer, perhaps," hesitated Emery, with an emotion for which Orione had not given him credit, for she knew that personally he disliked Perry. "Manslaughter, it might be called. It seems that they had a quarrel in the street, and—and—the upshot was, Boyce got a bullet in his throat."

"Strange; why should Perry quarrel with this man?"

"How should I know?"

"Where is Perry now?"

"In the station-house."

"I will go and see him."

"You?" cried Otto, aghast.

"Why not? He is my affianced husband. I believe him to be unjustly accused. Some other hand fired the fatal shot. He sprang to aid the victim, and his humanity has involved him in trouble, from which an examination will speedily extricate him."

"Don't be a fool!" exclaimed Otto, placing himself before the excited girl, as she was about to leave the room. "Consider your reputation: don't compromise it by visiting a murderer. No one knows of your engagement with Perry except ourselves; this charge will free you from all obligations; give him up, and accept Willis Bond. He is rich, loves you dearly, and is ready to make you his wife."

"Oh, is he?" said Orione, shaking back her curls with a disdainful toss of the head. "What a condescension! Willis Bond is your friend; Perry Ellwood is not, but he has my treth, and, guilty or not, as he may be, of the fearful charge which has been brought against him, so long as he remains true to me, I will never accept the hand of another, and least of all, that of Mr. Willis Bond."

Emery fairly quailed before the spirited girl, but he had too much at stake to desist from the advocacy he had undertaken.

"Orione," he began, in faltering accents, and his face was haggard and his whole appearance abject in the extreme, "prepare yourself for a disclosure which would to heaven I was not forced to make—we are ruined, utterly ruined. I am at the mercy of unrelenting creditors, whose claims can no longer be put off; and when those claims are satisfied we are—"

The rest choked in his throat. He sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

"Beggars! is it not?" asked Orione calmly, completing his unfinished sentence. "I might have suspected as much; though, strange to say, I did not. Otto Adare, look yonder at our father's portrait—that father you so little resemble—can you lift your eyes to those which beam so mildly from the canvas, and say that you have squandered in five short years the fortune it took him a lifetime to acquire, and which he bequeathed to his children with the fond hope that his toilsome life would secure to them a tranquil one of ease and elegance? You have some shame left; then I have hopes for you. Our life begins new. Give up all to your creditors, and if there is enough to satisfy them all, so much the better."

"My God!" cried Otto, wildly, "must it come to that?"

"What else can it come to?"

"Have I not told you? Willis Bond is rich—he will pay all my debts—"

"If I will marry him?" she interrupted, sharply; and there was a dangerous sparkle in those bright blue eyes that Otto had never noticed there before.

"Yes," he faltered.

"And you would make a traffic of my hand—sell your sister? Brother—no; you are no more my brother, I discard you from this hour. Sell all this house contains—my jewels, books, my costly wardrobe—to free yourself from debt; but my heart and hand are mine, and I only will dispose of them. I will

arrange my own marriage, you need not trouble yourself. Now I go to visit your old playfellow and mine, Perry Ellwood. If the world frowns upon him, his friends should not desert him, for it is in trouble and affliction that we need our friends."

He no longer sought to detain her. He had often winced beneath her imperious words, but never had she so thoroughly crushed him as now.

A ring at the gate checked her as she was leaving the room. She sprang to the window and glanced out.

"It is he?" she cried, joyously.

"Who?" asked Otto, moodily.

"Perry Ellwood."

Otto turned, with a start, from the window to which he had followed her. The next instant the servant ushered Ellwood into the apartment.

CHAPTER III.

"At liberty?" asked Otto, acknowledging the visitor's bow coldly.

"At liberty!" affirmed Perry, grasping the hand which Orione extended with frank impetuosity towards him.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Otto.

The word meant nothing; he felt called upon to say something, and so he said that.

"Yes," responded Perry; "the innocent have nothing to fear. The charge could not be substantiated, and this morning I was set at liberty."

"And the true murderer," asked Orione, eagerly, "has he been discovered?"

"He has not—no clue to him has been found. I do not think he will easily be discovered."

"Why not?"

"The affair was evidently a sudden quarrel—the victim an unknown adventurer, without family or friends to set the bloodhounds of the law more actively upon the track of his slayer. The circumstance will fade quickly from the public mind."

Orione coughed significantly, and Otto excused himself and left the room.

"Oh, I am so thankful that you have escaped this dreadful charge!" said Orione, as she suffered Perry to lead her to a sofa, and seat himself beside her.

There was little of the coquette in her manner then; she was quiet and subdued, and a pensive light gleamed from those lustrous eyes, as pure in hue as heaven's sapphire arch. Her late conversation with her brother still lingered in her mind, and though the troubled waters of her soul had been in a measure calmed by the joy of Perry's arrival, yet they still heaved with a sudden swell that made her sad and thoughtful.

"Orione," said Perry, at length, for he had sat for minutes in that silent happiness which the lover feels when his idol is near him, "Orione, pardon me if I appear importunately curious, but do you know Mr. Willis Bond?"

Orione started, and gazed into his face with a resumption of her old mischievous look—that look which had bewildered many eyes.

"Are we getting jealous?" she asked, playfully.

Perry was in no mood for this playfulness, so he imprisoned her hands in his, and looked earnestly into her eyes; he thought he could read the truth there, try to conceal it as she would.

"I am serious, Orione," he said, gently, "and I beg of you answer me in that wise. I heard words last night that caused me much pain, though at the same time they taught me how dear you are to me. I heard your name coupled with that of Willis Bond; it was said that he sought you for a wife. Is it so?"

"Really, how should I know?" mischief in the eyes again. "He has not proposed as yet."

"He is a constant visitor here?"

"He is Otto's particular friend."

"Do you never see him?"

"I must do the honours of the house."

"I am satisfied, and can readily understand what the magnet is that attracts Mr. Bond hither. Orione, you are beautiful!"

"There are looking-glasses in the house," said Orione, demurely.

"But it is not for your beauty that I love you, though I can scarcely convey to you the charm that I find in your face—that spiritual expression which seems more akin to heaven than earth. A look in the depths of those eyes which, I have sometimes fancied, was revealed only to me—a look which indicated an unshaken faith—a soul beyond the thought of guile. I give you all my heart; I must have all yours in return. If we have misunderstood each other, it is not yet too late to retrace our steps. What I am, you know. A life of toil, but not privation, is before me; did I think you would be subjected to any hardship, I would not ask you to share that life. I think I can protect you from all evils, perhaps provide you with a home as luxurious as the one you leave for my sake; but I am not rich, and cannot deck you like a queen,

as can Mr. Bond. Therefore, if you have mistaken my heart, give me back the ring I placed upon your finger, and I will trouble you no more."

"Will you have it now?" asked Orione, mockingly, as she raised her finger, on which glittered the engagement ring—two pearls and two garnets set in a cluster—and made a pretence to remove it.

Perry's brow darkened, his lips quivered, and a mist gathered in his eyes. Orione laughed merrily as she witnessed his consternation.

"I shall keep the ring," she said, "unless you demand it back again."

"I? never! Then you do love me?"

"Yes." But rather faintly. The humming-bird disliked to fold her wings.

"And you will not marry Mr. Bond?"

"Never!" Very decisive.

"And you will marry me?"

"Yes!" Very low.

Perry ratified the contract on the lips that had so sweetly breathed the promise of his happiness. The lover's transport was interrupted by the sudden opening of the door, and Otto entered. The lovers hastily moved from their close proximity, but he did not see, or pretended not to do so, for he said, carelessly:

"I am going out, Orione—for he said to dinner. Good-morning, Perry."

He closed the door, leaving the lovers once more alone. Perry now pressed Orione to name the happy day, but a cloud had overshadowed her happiness, and she became suddenly absent and evasive in her replies. In the joy of Perry's presence she had in a measure forgotten what Otto had told her, but now the dread truth, for she could not doubt his words, flashed through her mind. It would be dishonest, she thought, to accept her suitor with this disgrace hanging over her; for she well knew that her poverty would be looked upon as a disgrace, and it would be said that she had deceived her lover; and could she tell him, and expose her brother's prodigality? No, she felt she could not. He must wait, and surely she was worth it, and then when the blow came, and she had saved all she could from the wreck of their fortune, she could freely place her hand in his without regret. Swayed by this thought, she suffered Perry to leave her in a moody and dissatisfied state of mind, for he construed her reticence into coquetry, and the image of Willis Bond would intrude itself into his imagination.

As Perry left the house, he met a gentleman who had just come up the little avenue that led from the street to the house.

He was a stranger to him; unconsciously he turned to gaze after him, as he passed him with a supercilious air. He rang the bell, and was admitted into the house.

"Who can that be?" exclaimed Perry, unconsciously uttering his thoughts aloud.

"I will tell you—it is Willis Bond."

Perry looked around, and saw Otto Adare sitting in a little vine-covered arbour gazing at him with a malicious glance of triumph. He walked leisurely towards him.

"It appears, then, that he visits at your house?" said Perry, seating himself beside Otto, and endeavouring to conceal the jealous fury which had taken possession of his breast.

"He is here every day," said Otto, drily. "Orione does not care anything for him; but she will flirt, you know."

Perry set his teeth firmly together. Engaged to him, and flirting with another! It was not right, and he did not like it.

As he did not speak, Otto continued the conversation:

"You got out of that scrape last night very nicely," he said. "It looked rather black for you at the time. How did you come to be suspected?"

"Simply enough," returned Perry, who was now quite calm. "I was going home, when I heard a pistol fired, and, hurrying on, I found a man lying upon the footway."

"Dead?" asked Otto, eagerly.

"No. I raised him in my arms. He still had strength to tell me what had happened, for he recognized me as quickly as I did him. Coming from a gambling resort, he had encountered a young man about town, from whom he had previously won large sums of money at play, and who then owed him a large amount of 'debts of honour,' as such things are called. This young man had demanded a loan, and upon being refused had, without any warning, drawn a pistol from his pocket and discharged its contents in his throat, instantly making his escape. He implored me to bring his assassin to justice, and then sank back exhausted."

"Did he tell you his name?" gasped Otto, who had grown quite livid.

"Oh, yes."

"Then you know—?"

"The assassin's name?—yes. Shall I tell you?"

Otto was silent.
"I need not bind you to secrecy. You will not betray it any more than myself. It was—OTTO ADARE."

Otto gave a moan of despair. His limbs suddenly failed him.

He slipped off the seat, and grovelled on the arbour floor at Perry's feet.

"Mercy!" he cried. "By your love for Orione, and the love she bears you—for she does love you—I implore you do not give me up to justice."

"Have no fears," answered Perry, calmly. "Your secret is safe with me. My conscience acquits me of all criminality in the concealment of your guilt by the reflection that this dreadful deed may perhaps be the means of opening your eyes to the dangers of the path you are pursuing, and work your reformation. For Orione's sake, I will keep the secret as if it were my own."

The voice ceased, and when the wretched and guilty young man raised his head from the ground, he found himself alone.

CHAPTER IV.

"He knows all; my life is in his hands," mused the unhappy young man, and instead of feeling grateful to Perry for concealing the knowledge of his guilt, although accused of the crime himself, a bitter feeling of resentment against him arose in his breast, and he determined to thwart his union with Orione, and further Willis Bond's suit by every means in his power.

Scarcely had he arrived at this determination, when he saw Bond emerging from the house, looking anything but pleased. Otto stepped from the arbour and joined him.

"Your sister is an arrant flirt!" was Bond's unceremonious salutation.

He was a man of medium stature, and rather stout, with a heavy reddish beard, light brown hair, florid complexion, and dull blue eyes. He was fashionably dressed, wore a diamond breast-pin and a heavy gold watch-chain. The man of means was legibly impressed upon all his actions. He was a banker.

"An arrant flirt!" he repeated, playing with his watch-chain, and nervously stamping the heels of his boots into the ground.

"She is something very like it," answered Otto, vaguely.

"By heaven! she has rejected me," continued the banker, angrily. "Let me tell you, Otto Adare, there are not many girls who would scorn, as your sister has done, the offer of my hand. Confound the witch!" he proceeded, more to himself than his companion, "what is there in that pretty face of hers that makes me covet her so much? Well, the farce is over. She has played with me as long as suited her capricious humour, and now I am cast aside like a worn-out glove!"

Otto watched the proud man, while he thus chafed, with a cat-like glance. He was in the very humour to suit his purpose.

"She does not know her own mind, Bond," he said, quietly. "I have promised you my sister's hand. I think I can procure it for you yet; that is, if her rejection has not discouraged you."

"You can?" said Bond, eagerly. "Do so, and take half my fortune."

"It will not cost you so much," laughed Otto. "This place is becoming too hot to hold me, and I wish to leave it. Your influence can procure me a commission in the army. Will you do so?"

"With pleasure."

"Then Orione shall be yours."

"By what means?"

"Leave that to me. I will walk with you and explain."

That night, at a late hour, as Perry Ellwood was returning home, he met Otto Adare. He greeted him coldly, and would have passed on, but the latter detained him.

"Perry," he said, earnestly, "my good name, perhaps my life, is in your hands, and you have treated me most generously. I feel that I owe you a service in return. You love my sister Orione, and you think that love is reciprocated. She is making a fool of you."

Perry turned sharply on his heel and gazed fixedly in his face, which he could plainly see in the moonlight.

"Otto," he said, sternly, "you are not speaking the truth."

The brother of Orione winced and looked troubled. "I scarcely believed you would credit my words," he went on to say, after an awkward pause, "but I do not think you will discredit the proof I can give you."

"What proof?"

"Come to my house and you shall see."

With these ambiguous words, Otto led the way, and Perry, sorely troubled and bewildered, followed.

They reached the villa, and cautiously entered the garden.

Cautioned by Emery to be profoundly silent, Perry suffered himself to be led to one of the windows where the looped-up curtains permitted a survey of the interior. He beheld Orione seated at the piano, and warbling a love-song with great animation, whilst Willis Bond bent over her with undisguised admiration.

He turned from the window with a muttered imprecation. The poison had entered his soul.

"Are you satisfied?" whispered Otto.

"Yes," he hissed between his set teeth, stepped from the green sward into the path, and hurried hastily away.

"What a pity it is that Orione will flirt!" laughed Otto, and he went into the house.

Perry gained his home with his brain on fire. All was clear to him now—Orione's hesitation and embarrassment when he had pressed her to name the day were explained.

She was merely playing with him, keeping him in suspense until she had secured his rich rival, and then he would be cast aside like the broken toy of a spoiled child.

He called her some very hard names in his indignation, which it is useless to repeat here. Everybody knows what a lover calls her whom he loves, when he deems her false.

He did not sleep that night. The balmy rest that invigorates man, was denied him. The golden curls and blue eyes of Orione haunted him like spectres, and drove all slumber from his eyelids.

His first act in the morning was to pen a brief note to Orione. It contained these words:

"I am satisfied that you are false. Return my ring, and I will release you from all vows and claims, and never trouble you again."

He sealed it, addressed it, and dropped it in the post-office himself. He received the answer before the evening. A plain white envelope, addressed with his name, in characters he recognized at once. Now all would be explained, for he began to fancy that he had been rather hasty, and found the task of banishing her image from his heart more difficult than he imagined. The pure and holy faith he had read in the depths of those blue eyes could not change so readily to treachery and deceit. The explanation was in his hands—for surely she loved him too well not to offer one—the mist of doubt would clear away, and the stars of love and truth shine out once more.

With trembling hand he tore open the envelope. A ring dropped out upon the table. It was all the envelope contained. His ring was returned to him, nothing else—not a line, not a word. He seized the ring with fingers that were as numb as if chilled by sudden frost. It was the engagement ring, two pearls and two garnets in a gold circle, with the legend engraved within: *P. to O.*—that was all.

Well did he remember the day when he had placed that ring upon the willing finger, and the pretty poetical sentiment he had uttered at the time. "Pearls and garnets," he said; "the pearls indicate the purity, and the garnets the warmth of my affection." He also remembered that at their last meeting he had said that the return of the ring should be a symbol that their love was a mistake, and both were free again. The ring was returned and he was free, but somehow the reflection did not make him happy. His dream of happiness was over, and life was now a blank, for he realized how dear Orione was to him when she was lost. A stern resolution came into his eyes, and his plan of life was formed anew. A few days sufficed to put that plan into operation. After arranging everything to make his mother comfortable in his absence, Perry Ellwood enlisted.

When Orione heard that Perry Ellwood had enlisted, which intelligence was communicated by her brother Otto, she fled to her chamber in dismay without uttering a single word. But in her solitude she let her grief break forth. He had gone in anger, without one parting word, and her false pride had driven him to this rash step. She should never see him more; his death would lie at her door; and then she found relief in woman's great remedy—her tears.

CHAPTER V.

It was the night before the final assault upon Sebastopol. All day the guns of the allied fleets had thundered from the sea front, and from the land side artillery and musketry had rained their iron hail against the strong Russian fastness.

Reinforcements had been hurried up, and a young lieutenant of the brigade of Guards was sent into the field, to smell powder burned in earnest. He commanded a picket post that closely hugged the outer intrenchment. As he glanced his eye over the file of men who had been detailed for the

service, and who awaited his orders firm and erect, like so many living machines, a strange recognition took place.

"Perry Ellwood!" he exclaimed.
"Here, Lieutenant Adare!" replied private Ellwood, saluting.

Thus, these two men, who were so near being brothers, met again. One hearty, brown, with a manly fire in his eye, clad in the faded, dust-coloured regimentals of a private; the other pale, listless, with a sunken eye and careworn look, with the showy uniform of a lieutenant, looking more fit for a ball-room than a battle-field.

The sentinels were placed, and Otto bade Ellwood sit beside him at the picket fire. He took out his cigar-case, handing it to Perry with an easy, careless air; but Perry did not smoke, so Otto lit a cigar for himself, and puffed leisurely away.

"You know me, of course?" asked Otto, blowing away the smoke from his cigar in dainty puffs.

"Of course," repeated Perry, the blood mounting to his cheeks, despite his efforts to control himself.

"Yes. Thought you would like to hear the news from home."

"I should."

A pause, and Otto watching Perry curiously through the wreaths of cigar smoke.

"Concerning anybody in particular?"

"You know."

"Orione?"

"Yes."

"Of course you have heard?"

"I have heard nothing."

"Strange!" Otto lifted his eyebrows and puffed in silence for a few minutes. "Did not know she was married, eh?"

"No."

Was it a moan of human pain or the sighing of the night wind? Perry's face was very pale in the firelight.

"Oh, yes. She married Willis Bond soon after you left. Sorry for you, my boy; but then you know what a flirt she was. She worries the life out of the poor fellow. He was really quite thin the last time I saw him, and you know how stout he used to be. There, I think I'll take a short nap—been on foot all day—just wake me up if anything happens."

He threw away the stump of his cigar, and lay down by the fire, muffling himself in his cloak. He was soon wrapped in slumber, or appeared to be, for he lay motionless. But Perry could not sleep. Orione married! and he had still dared to think, to hope—that was enough to keep him watchful until the dawn.

The next day the regiment formed part of the division which was hurled against the enemy's works. They met with a check, and were obliged to fall back. An officer belonging to Perry's company, in fact the only officer remaining, for all the rest were killed or disabled, was left in the hands of the enemy. Perry led his comrades to the rescue, and they liberated him, badly wounded, from his captors, and bore him to the rear. This officer was Otto Adare.

Perry hastened for a surgeon, finding one whom he persuaded to accompany him with some difficulty, for the wounded were lying thickly about. The surgeon examined the wounded man, and shook his head gravely.

"Can do nothing for him," he said; "not half-an-hour's life in him!"

And he hastened to another part of the field, where his services might be of value.

The noise of battle died out, and the declining sun lighted up the scene of carnage.

Otto opened his eyes, and saw the face of Perry Ellwood bending over him, for it was his breast that pillowed his head.

"Brave fellow!" he gasped, with a smile, pressing Perry's hands feebly. "And I am a brave fellow, too, am I not?" with a childish laugh. "Didn't I lead on the boys bravely? No white feather, eh? More bloodshed, Perry; but God will not hold me accountable for this, like the other, will He? I didn't mean to kill that man, you know that, don't you? I've never had a happy day since—nothing could drive away the memory."

"Perry!" cried the dying man, with sudden energy. "I don't deserve your kindness; I've been a scoundrel—to you in particular. You tried to save my life to-day, and it isn't your fault that you didn't do it; and what have I done for you—for Orione—the best sister man ever had—what have I done—what have I done?"

He rambled on incoherently for a few moments, and Perry thought that the delirium of death was upon him, but it was not so, for he suddenly became calm again, and his eye brightened as if inspired by some new-born resolution.

"Perry, I must tell you something before I die. You know that night you saw Orione and Bond in the drawing-room, and I told you that she was flirting with him? Well, that was a lie! I sent

him there to await my coming under pretence of having something important to say to me, and he was to persuade her to sing. I knew that would be an easy ask, as she would rather sing at any time than listen to his twaddle. Had you not both been so proud and sensitive, my flimsy plot had been seen through in a minute. When I met you on picket I told you that Orione was married to Willis Bond—that was another lie!"

"Orione not married!"

"No—and never will be, I fancy, unless you go back for her. Bond never had a ghost of a chance, in spite of all I could do for him. Forgive me, old boy. You do? All right. I'm a scapegrace, but—but—tell Orione how it happened—and say—marry her—my blessing!"

The voice died away in a murmur—a sigh—then all was still. The young lieutenant of the Guards was dead.

Through the perils of the campaign Perry passed unscathed, to see the stronghold won, and to meet his reward in promotion, and to receive the Victoria Cross for bravery in the field and rescuing his officer. And it was as a decorated officer that Perry met Orione once more. Their interview was necessarily a constrained and formal one, but the kindly pressure of the hand assured each other that the heart cherished no bitter memory of the past.

When the last sad days of mourning were over, and the pageantry of death put aside, Perry ventured to call upon Orione. He wasted few words in ceremony, but proceeded at once to the purpose of his visit. He explained the circumstances which had made him demand back his ring.

"It is here," he said, taking it from a small pocket; "and ever since you sent it back I have worn it next my heart. My pride made me demand it back."

"And my pride made me send it," she responded, softly.

"If I place it again upon your finger?"

"I will never part with it but with life!"

"And you will be mine?"

"I will be yours."

"It is still pearls and garnets, Orione," he said; "pearls for your purity and truth—"

"And garnets," she interrupted, "for the blood which you have so freely offered at the altar of your country's honour."

G. L. A.

OMNIBUSES.—Paris has just forty-six omnibuses less than London, the respective numbers being five hundred and thirty-seven and five hundred and eighty-three; but the Paris 'buses carry ninety millions passengers in a year, whereas only forty-one million English indulge in the dubious luxury. The Paris receipts are 55f. 70c. per omnibus per diem, whereas the London "cad" has a good day with 70f. 60c. The London omnibuses run in the day over a space equal to once round the world.

THE way Italian peasants eat was described by Professor Joy. He said that in riding by the fields in the morning you would see a large kettle of Indian meal and water boiling over a fire in the field. When the mush is cooked it is poured out upon a large flat stone, when the men, women, and children gather about, and take it up in their hands and eat it. At noon you will see the same process, and at night the same. They eat little else than mush. At first there was a prejudice against the American corn, as they call it, but now it is almost the only article of food among them.

MR. THOMAS HUGHES ("Tom Brown") has declined to become a candidate for Finsbury at the next election. In a letter announcing this determination, Mr. Hughes says, "I have given up the idea of standing; upon careful inquiry I found that the expenses could not be reckoned at less than £1,000. I have no right to spend such a sum for such a purpose; but were I a rich man, to whom the expense would be a matter of indifference, I should hesitate on public grounds before giving in to a system which I believe to be injurious to the country."

A FEW days ago a gentleman called at the photographic department in the Crystal Palace, and arranged for the "taking" of a group. The group was a memento of the 50th anniversary of his wedding-day; and his wife, his sons and daughters, his grandchildren, and even some great-grand-children, in all to the number of 47, were effectively photographed by the large camera in the room specially designed to groups. Such a circumstance is worthy of note, not less as a feat in photography than as a very rare and complete family gathering, which has an interest beyond its own immediate circle.

It may be useful before sending off any further threatening dispatches to have an exact account of the strength of the armies of some of the ruling Powers of Europe, so that we may measure our strength and not overmatch ourselves, as it has been feared by the

Premier and his colleagues we might do. Here is a list of a few:—Oldenburg, 3,740 men of all arms; Saxe-Meiningen, 1,918; Reuss-Greiz and Reuss-Schleiz combined, 1,229 infantry, and 12 men of all other arms; the Prince of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, 899; Schwarzburg-Sonderhausen, 751; the Duke of Anhalt-Bernburg, 616; Schaumburg-Lippe, 347 foot soldiers and 3 artillerymen; the Duchy of Nassau has a regiment of cavalry numbering 15 men; the King of the Sandomir Islands has a standing army of 120 men; the Prince of Lichtenstein has 91 men all told. Let him have a dispatch at once.

THE LOVELINESS OF NATURE.

Oh! the loveliness of Nature!

We see it in the flowers

That bloom and blossom in the dells

To cheer the summer hours.

We see it in the towering oak

Whose branches clave the air;

In blade of grass, in gurgling brook;

In fact, 'tis everywhere.

How softly floats the summer clouds

Upon the balmy air,

And what than summer rainbow's arch

More beautiful or fair?

How sweetly floats the song of birds,

How pensive sighs the breeze,

Through branches green and verdant leaves

Of all the forest trees.

The lakelet's mirrored surface shows

The azure blue of heaven:

The valleys teem with harvests rich

As blessings to us given.

In mountain height, in waterfall,

In everything around,

In heaven above, in earth beneath,

Does loveliness abound.

A. T.

ISLA GRANDE.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE LAST STRUGGLE OF CALLOCARRAS.

THE evening was beautiful—the moonlight and starlight lending their romantic charms to the pirates' retreat, and the freebooters were in the midst of a gay festival, when a strange cry from the sentinels on the northern side of the Rim circulated like wild-fire among them, and was caught up by the entire occupants of the island—

"The Bloodhound has returned!"

Immediately all was confusion and noisy excitement, and the buccaners rushed forth to meet him.

The pirate came swiftly through the passage in a little boat, with a degree of haste and alarm unusual to him. He was panting with the exertion of rowing ashore from a little sloop lying off the island. His eyes were bloodshot; his swarthy face lit up with an expression of desperation; his long, black beard dishevelled; his burly form trembling with agitation, and his whole appearance that of a man driven to his last resort and resolved to stand at bay.

As the pirates beheld him row into the lagoon, their joy was great, manifesting itself in shouts and cheers.

"How did you come here?" asked the late lieutenant. "What is the matter? You look completely exhausted."

"The matter is," said Callocarras, hoarsely, "that that Ruy Leol, whom we marooned, has escaped! How, I do not know, nor can I imagine. He went to Cuba, and is now leading a large force against us. I came back in the sloop to warn you (for he may have some clue to our retreat), and to lead you to another victory!"

The men cheered the Bloodhound, and the utmost excitement prevailed.

"I expect the enemy every instant," continued Callocarras. "There's no telling when they will arrive. We must be in readiness. Have you fitted up the Silver Ship—that is, the galleon?"

"Yes; it's as good as ever."

"And the schooner is all safe, and here's the sloop outside—three vessels against the enemy, and it shall go hand with us if we do not give them trouble. Let me once get my eye upon that Ruy Leol!"

The huge form of the pirate-chief trembled with his wild emotions of rage and disappointment, and he drew a heavy sword from his belt and flourished it furiously.

And then, with long cheers, he was reinstated in command, his Lieutenant making a motion to that effect, and instant preparations were entered upon to repel the foe.

"Let the galleon be manned, as well as the schooner and sloop," commanded the Bloodhound, his voice ringing harshly through the Bowl. "Six of the boys are already on the sloop, who came with me. We

must not leave a man on the island; we shall need them every one in the coming fight. We must meet the foe outside of the retreat. If they have a clue to our hiding-place they can shell us out. Better fight on the open sea, as that will give us a chance to run. Man and arm the vessels, my brave boys. Be lively!"

The men rushed about in a state of the wildest excitement, but soon calmed themselves under the orders of their chief, and performed the duties assigned them with dispatch. The galleon, restored to its pristine strength, the beautiful schooner, and the sloop, were soon in readiness for a conflict, and the vessels in the lagoon were taken outside to their smaller consort.

It was at first decided that the women should remain in the Bowl, secluded from all harm, but their entreaties to be taken aboard one of the vessels finally prevailed, and they were all removed to the hold of the pirate-sloop, Callocarras remarking:

"They are right, boys. If we run, we don't want to leave them to the enemy; and if we conquer, they are safe with us!"

The night passed without any indications of the enemy, as did the following day and the next night, and about the middle of the third day after the return of Callocarras to his followers, the pirate chief said:

"Well, boys, perhaps, after all, they have no clue to our retreat. Without a clue, they may search for us until they die of old age!"

He was interrupted by the look-out, who exclaimed:

"A sail to the northward!"

Callocarras caught up a glass and scanned the seas in that direction.

His practised eye soon distinguished a sail on the horizon—two sails—yes, three of them—all approaching Bowl Island.

He instantly perceived that the leader was the expected brig of Captain Brote, and that the others were also men-of-war.

"Boys," said the Bloodhound, addressing his followers, who thronged the decks of the three vessels, "they have come in stronger force than I expected; but it's too late to run away. It's life or death with us now. This is the hour for a decisive blow. Let us cripple the Spanish ships, defend our retreat and the vast wealth it contains, and prove that the name of the Bloodhound is still to be feared by his enemies! You have behaved gallantly in many a battle—do your best now!"

His words filled the dark hearts of his men with his fierce spirit, and he concluded:

"We will throw ourselves upon the principal vessel of the enemy, all at once, as soon as she is near enough to us. Let us cripple her first and then dispose of her companions."

His men were bristling with steel, their belts gleaming with knives and pistols, while they flourished their swords in their hands. The galleon and the schooner both had guns of good size, and they stood ahead of the sloop.

"I will take the lead, boys!" shouted Callocarras to the sloop and galleon, after further observing the approaching foe and recognizing Ruy and Count Regla on the deck of the brig. "You've only to follow!"

Away flew the schooner to meet the approaching expedition, and the galleon and the sloop followed at a slower rate. Directly towards the brig of war went the piratical schooner, a good wind favouring both vessels, and they were soon within hail, the brig seeming nothing loth to enter upon the deadly struggle.

"Aho! there!" shouted Captain Brote, as he came so near that the leaders of the two principal vessels distinguished each other's features. "Surrender!"

He was answered by a shower of leaden hail from the schooner, and Callocarras shouted back to him with fierce threats and wild words of defiance.

For a few moments there was a brisk interchange of shot, and then the vessels swept alongside of each other, the grappling irons were thrown from the pirates' vessel, and with a shout like that of a demon, Callocarras led his men over the sides of the brig.

Her large complement of men had already attracted the pirate's attention, but now, when the struggle was fairly begun, the crew of the galleon, with their Isla Grande volunteers, all armed to the teeth, came pouring upon the deck, carrying terror to the hearts of the assailants.

"Aha!" shouted the Bloodhound, with a gesture of dismay. "Fight for your lives, boys!"

The injunction was obeyed, the pirates rushing fiercely upon their enemies, while Callocarras himself rushed toward Ruy and measured swords with him.

Our hero fought with the coolness and bravery that distinguished him, parrying the blows and thrusts of his antagonist, who seemed to be in a frenzy of desperation, and giving him several severe thrusts in the shoulder and breast. To Ruy's astonishment, no blood followed his deep strokes, but heavy rolls and wads of cotton dropped from the pirate's person. Be-

fore he fairly understood the meaning of this strange revelation, the pirate lieutenant came to the rescue of his master, uttering wild yells, and at the same moment the villainous Lasso, intent on his treachery, came up stealthily behind our hero, with drawn sword, to put an end to his existence.

"Ah!" screamed the Bloodhound, with a fiendish yell at beholding Lasso. "So! you guided the enemy here—you treacherous dog! Ha, ha! Here's your reward!"

With a cry that was truly infernal, the Bloodhound swept aside the combatants in his path and rushed upon the pretended priest.

"Oh, have mercy!" cried Lasso, in an agony of cowardly fear. "Oh! don't! don't!"

He put up his sword in front of him to ward off the blows of the avenger, and made a vain effort to defend himself, but his ignorance of the use of his weapon and his cowardice combined rendered him an easy prey.

The Bloodhound plunged his sword into him two or three times, and gave utterance to a hollow laugh, full of triumphant malice, as he shouted:

"Such be the fate of traitors. Ha! ha!"

The pretended priest sank to the deck with a groan, while Callocarras rushed back to Ruy. He found his lieutenant slain and one of his most valued men lying upon him, also killed by the hand of our hero, and his bloodshot eyes seemed starting from their sockets as he again sprang upon him.

Again and again did Ruy thrust at the heart of the villain while ably defending himself, and again and again came to his ears a metallic clang, as if his weapon had struck against steel.

For several minutes this renewed struggle was continued, as a central point of the wild struggle that raged around the combatants, and then Ruy, by dint of repeated blows, found an opening in the chain-armor covering the villain's chest. A moment more, and his swiftly-gleaming sword pierced the vitals of Callocarras, who fell to the deck with a loud cry in the agonies of dissolution.

His fall, combined with that of the lieutenant, struck a panic to the hearts of his followers.

They fought a few moments longer in a broken and irregular way, and then yielded to the superior force of the enemy, at the same moment that the galleon and sloop, appalled by the fate of their consort, surrendered to the remaining vessels of the expedition.

The surviving pirates were all disarmed and consigned to the holds of the war-vessels, but the majority of their number were killed, and these were at once flung overboard.

The deck was nearly cleared, and the sounds of conflict died out, when Yola, impelled by fears for her lover, came rushing out of the hold, where she, with others, had been placed for safety.

She found Ruy, but slightly wounded, bending over the form of Callocarras, whose now glaring eyes were fixed upon our hero in a look of impotent hatred.

"Ah!" exclaimed Ruy, noticing a string attached to the pirate's beard. "Run, Yola; get me some water!"

One of the seamen standing near handed our hero a flask of brandy, and with a manner full of strange agitation and suspicion Ruy tore the beard from the face of the dying Bloodhound.

"Is it possible?" he continued, excitedly, pouring some of the brandy upon the man's face, and rubbing it with a handkerchief, while Yola, catching his idea, tore off the pirate's wig. "He is indeed Senor Nerle!"

The last secret of the terrible pirate's successes was now revealed.

Callocarras and Senor Nerle were one and the same person!

His captors crowded around him with exclamations of wonder and astonishment, and Lasso lifted himself up on his elbow, and regarded the man who had given him his death-blow. His looks of horror attested that the fact now revealed had never been even suspected by him.

A further examination revealed that the burly form of the Bloodhound was owing to a complete suit of steel-armor in addition to thickly padded clothes, and Ruy instantly comprehended the full particulars of the deception that had been practised.

The dying Callocarras, or rather Nerle, gave a look of astonishment and rage at the horror-stricken Yola, flashed a last look of hate upon Ruy, who held his betrothed in his arms, and then a frightful spasm convulsed his features, his eyes became fixed, and he ceased to breathe!

A startled group stood around him—those who had known him as the gentle, polished Nerle, with his luxurious tastes and courtly habits, and who had also encountered him as the fierce and blood-thirsty Callocarras—and a general sigh of relief went around as they saw that he was dead!

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE FADRE'S CONFESSION.—CONCLUSION.

THE wounded seamen were attended to by their surgeons, the number of the dead ascertained, and it was found that the loss of the conquerors was comparatively slight. The dead were deposited in the sailor's universal grave, after they had been sewn in canvas, and the body of Nerle was also consigned to the sea, whereon he had so long been a scourge and a terror.

The condition of Lasso was discovered by Count Regla, who had him removed to the cabin of the brig, while the men were cleansing the blood-deluged decks.

"I am not going to die, am I?" groaned the villain, feeling the languor of approaching dissolution creeping over him. "Oh, tell the doctor to come here! Quick—quick!"

A surgeon came as soon as he could, but he shook his head, saying:

"I can do nothing here. I must return to those whom I can aid."

"What!" shrieked Lasso, in awful terror, "must I die? Can't you give me something to make me live?"

The surgeon shook his head.

"I can give you a stimulant that may keep you alive half an hour longer," he replied, "but you are beyond all cure."

With prayers and screams Lasso begged for the stimulant, and it was given him, and the surgeon departed.

"O my God!" said the dying man. "I can't die! I can't!"

"Think not of yourself," said Count Regla; "think first of those whom you have so cruelly wronged! You will receive no mercy from heaven, Reve Laslin, unless you show mercy to those to whom it is due."

The countess, Yola, Ruy, and others came around the dying man, and his eyes wandered from one to another, and then he gasped:

"I cannot live? I am surely dying?"

"Yes," said the countess, "you are dying. By the memory of the benefits heaped upon you by the Count Vicente, tell us the truth. Confess! confess!"

Her tone was full of anguish, and her husband was obliged to support her, or she would have fallen.

"I will confess!" said Lasso, feeling a sharper pain in his heart. "I am indeed Reve Laslin! I stole the children—Ruy and Nita! There they stand—Ruy Leol and Yola!"

With a cry of joy, deep and intense, the countess clasped the bewildered Ruy to her breast, and murmured:

"I knew it—my instinct told me that he was my son! Oh, my noble boy!"

The count folded her and Ruy close to his breast in one embrace, and Lasso continued:

"I have been false to the church, which I once hoped to serve as a priest. I was false to the trust reposed in me by Count Vicente. After my imprisonment by Count Regla I vowed revenge. I managed to escape from prison, stole his son and little Nita, and brought them both to Isla Grande. I left Ruy at the hammock-maker's door, and returned to the outer islands, where I stayed a day or two, and then came to the island, set up as a priest, and have lived there ever since. Truly, the wages of sin is death! I have sometimes looked forward with dread to this hour. Now I must face Count Vicente, whom I deceived—and, oh, worse! an outraged God, whose name I have disgraced and mocked!"

His voice rose to a wail, and his agony seemed unendurable.

"Count Regla," he cried, "shall I swear that Ruy is your lost son? I do swear it! Before God, into whose presence I am hastening, I swear that he is your own son, and Yola is your lost ward! Oh! have mercy—mercy—mercy!"

He sprang erect upon his couch, looked with a horrified gaze around him, and then he sank back again, dead, and with that agonized prayer upon his lips.

He was dropped overboard, like the others who had fallen in the conflict, and his dying words left behind him four happy hearts.

"Oh, my son!" said the count, clasping Ruy's hand in his, as they sat in the cabin after he had explained matters to him, "how strange and providential it has all happened! What joy to know that Yola is our lost Nita, and that you and she are betrothed! What joy to find you so noble and good—so worthy of our love!"

The countess and Yola echoed his words, and he soon continued:

"Only one more thing is wanted, and that is my lost silver. If I could only bestow it upon you, Ruy!"

"I know where it is," said Yola, with sparkling

eyes and quick breath. "It's buried on an island somewhere in these waters."

"Then we shall never find it," said the countess. "There are so many islands that it would be difficult to find the very one."

"But I should know this," returned Yola. "It is called The Peak."

"The Peak!" repeated Captain Romero. "I know where it is. As soon as Captain Brote has examined this retreat, we'll go to that island and search for the silver."

Bowl Island was examined the same day, its treasures removed to the war vessels, to be taken to Cuba, and the little fleet then prepared to set out for the Peak.

Count Regla called up all the Isla Grande volunteers and paid them handsomely, offering to send them home in Nerle's sloop, an offer which they gladly accepted. He then introduced Ruy to them as his son, and they soon after took their departure for Isla Grande, leaving Senor Leol and Iolel behind them.

Count Regla and his friends then transferred themselves to the galleon, and the fleet set out for The Peak, where they arrived the next day.

The silver was found and transferred to the galleon, not a bag of it having been lost, and the whole fleet then set out for Cuba, where they were welcomed by the Captain-General with many rejoicings.

The Senora Panzola was duly tried for her outrage on Ruy, and met the reward of her crimes, as did the captured pirates.

A week or two after the expedition's return to Havana, in the presence and beauty of the metropolis, a grand wedding took place at the Captain General's palace—the chief actors in which were Ruy Regla and his little Yola, and Captain Romero and Iolel Leol.

Soon after, news came to Count Regla of proposed changes in the Mexican government, which induced him to go back, and once more the Silver Ship was laden with her precious freight, and the count and countess, with their son and daughter, the Romeros and the old hammock-maker, returned to Mexico, and settled themselves upon the Regla estate.

The count and his lovely wife lived long to bless and be blessed in the society of their children, and at their death left their vast wealth to Ruy, as well as the family title.

The Romeros purchased an estate adjoining the Reglas, and old Senor Leol alternated his happy life between Ruy's splendid mansion and Iolel's handsome home, often finding it hard to realize that such grandeur should be meted out to the house of Leol.

The riper manhood of our hero was worthy of his brave and generous youth. His sons were like himself, and his daughters were counterparts of the lovely and innocent little Yola.

The Romeros were also blessed with noble children, and in the battles against the French invaders of Mexico none have distinguished themselves more conspicuously than have the young heirs of Regla and Romero.

The frosts of years are beginning to tinge the black hair of Ruy, and their weight to bend his stately form, but they have not chilled his heart nor damped his earnest, chivalrous love for her who is still, and ever will be, his own little Yola.

THE END.

The French have just launched a vessel called *Le Sphinx*. She is 52 metres long, 10 wide, draws 4.40 metres of water, and carries a 300-pounder in a 70-pounders. She can resist any shot at any distance, while no walls or ships will be able to stand against her *éperon en acier fondu*, or her 300-pound shot. It is plain our friends across the water are not asleep as regards their armour-plating, and have got a 300-pound gun. If the 600-pounder of which such marvels are reported goes on well, let us have a few hundred at once.

FACTS IN NATURAL HISTORY.—The rattlesnake finds a superior foe in the deer and the black snake. Whenever a buck discovers a rattlesnake in a situation which invites attack, he loses no time in preparing for battle. He makes up between ten or twelve feet of the snake, then leaps forward and aims to sever the body of the snake with his sharp bifurcated hoofs. The first onset is most commonly successful, but, if otherwise, the buck repeats the trial until he cuts the snake in twain. The black snake is also more than an equal competitor against the rattlesnake. Such is its celerity of motion, not only in running, but in entwining itself round its victim, that the rattlesnake has no way of escaping from its fatal embrace. When the black and rattlesnakes are about to meet for battle, the former darts forward at the height of his speed, and strikes at the neck of the latter with unerring certainty, leaving a foot or two of the upper part of his own body at liberty. In an instant he encircles him within five or six folds; he

then stops and looks the strangled and gasping foe in the face, to ascertain the effect produced upon his corseted body. If he shows signs of life, the coils are multiplied and the screws tightened, the operator all the while watching the countenance of the helpless victim. Thus the two remain thirty or forty minutes—the executioner then slackens one coil, noticing at the same time whether any signs of life appear; if so, the coil is resumed and retained until the incarcerated wretch is completely dead. The moccasin-snake is destroyed in the same way.

THE MONTENEGRINES.

THE Prince Nicholas was only eighteen years old; he had been betrothed from infancy to the daughter of one of the principal landowners in Montenegro, and he was married to her two years later, when she had attained the age of fourteen. He is an extraordinary handsome man, looking much older than his real age, very tall and well-made. His forehead is wide and open, his hair and eyes nearly black, and the naturally soft, somewhat sad expression of his Southern face is animated by a sweet and frequent smile.

All the Montenegrines that I have seen, with but one or two exceptions, are tall, with well-built limbs, very dark hair and eyes, ruddy, not olive, complexion, and most of them have beautiful teeth. Their beards are all closely shaven, but they wear large moustaches.

The Montenegro costume is the handsomest and most graceful I have seen in any country. The Prince wore dark blue cloth pantaloons, cut in the Syrian style, very full and wide, gathered in at the knees with scarlet garters; a Damascus silk scarf round the loins, and at his waist a huge crimson leather band, in which the arms are placed; the Prince, however, is the only man who carries none at home.

The scarlet waistcoat, embroidered and buttoned with gold, is half concealed by a closely-fitting tunic of white cloth, also richly embroidered in gold; the full court dress is the same, only that the tunic is then worn of green. Sometimes fur edgings are added, and all the gentlemen about the court had rows of large silver buttons sewn so thickly on the fronts of the tunic as quite to conceal the cloth, and to give the appearance of armour; while some had curious shoulder pieces of solid silver covered with bosses, completely covering the neck and shoulders.

The cap is of fur, with a *panache* of white cloth, embroidered and tasselled, hanging down at one side; this is in war, or in travelling, or in winter; in summer or at home the Montenegrine wears a peculiar pork-pie cap with a black silk border and a scarlet centre. All the Montenegrines wear embroidered leggings; the Prince alone wears high leather boots. He wore gloves, as did every one at court, constantly.

The dress of the peasants is made more or less in the same form, of common materials; all of them add, for cold and rainy weather, a thick cloak called the *strockah*, which is made of undyed wool, coarsely spun in long pile, so as closely to resemble an untanned sheepskin.

Opposite the gate of the palace there is a very fine plane-tree, from which the whole of the principal street of the little town can be seen. At one side of this the Prince is building a pretty little house for his beloved aunt, the Princess Darinka. While I rested under this tree late in the afternoon, I saw the Senate, sitting in full convocation in the open air at the furthest end of the street; and no sooner had I appeared than the whole assembly, of about thirty men, rose up and came to greet me and bid me welcome to the Black Mountain.

They stood round me in a half-circle of splendid dresses and fierce faces, whilst, making Mirko their spokesman, they eagerly dictated speeches to me, expressing their pleasure at seeing an English lady among them, and their hopes of my health and happiness in Montenegro and out of it.

All this Gospody Zoga, the aide-de-camp, translated into Italian for our benefit, for Mirko would not trust himself to speak Italian to a stranger, though he understands it pretty well. And after I assured them of my interest in Montenegro and her people, they proceeded in the most amusing way to implore me to beg England would request Austria, Russia, and Turkey to let them grow rich and happy; and then they asked me pathetically if I did not think they ought to have a port on the sea-coast, and so be enabled to let all the world know what good wine and wood and skins the Black Mountaineers could sell.—*The Eastern Shores of the Atlantic in 1863, with a Visit to Montenegro.* By the Viscountess Strangford.

The paddle-wheel steamer *Terrible*, 21 guns, 800 horse-power, and 1,850 tons, the largest paddle-wheel steamer in the British navy, having been upwards of two years in dock undergoing a most extensive repair, has been undocked, and is now being fitted for

the Chatham steam reserve in readiness for immediate commission. During the time she has been in the shipwright's hands she has been almost entirely rebuilt.

THE BONDAGE OF BRANDON.

CHAPTER XLII.

Look last at home—ye love not to look there
On the grim smile of comfortless despair.

The Curse of Minerva.

THE train deposited Girling in a part of London which is neither salubrious nor picturesque. Here you see little or nothing but straight, ugly, smoke-begrimed walls, and the people who inhabit these beaver-like houses seem to be the very incarnation of soot; a species of human beings formed out of concentrated essences of coal. They are black as to their hands, and black as to their faces; wherever the air can penetrate it defiles them. When the sun shines, it does so in a ghastly mocking manner, which leads you to suppose that it is making fun of the misery of those who are compelled by an overgrown and bloated state of civilization, to herd together like a flock of sheep, in places where no pig would dwell, if it were allowed to select its dwelling-place.

This is a district fertile in courts and alleys, and close, pent-up streets, where the pure air of heaven never has a chance of penetrating.

Girling feeling himself hungry thought that while he was in a cheap neighbourhood he had better get something to eat, as his slender stock of money would not be of much service to him in the expensive vicinity of the West End, whither he was bound in order to make the necessary inquiries about Lady Blanche Brandon.

Looking about him, he saw written up over a shop window, in very dirty white letters, "Harris's Coffee House." The outside was not very inviting, but, being of a credulous disposition, he thought that the interior might be of a superior description. On entering he was disagreeably disappointed, for everything from the chairs and tables to the plates and dishes, was of the dirtiest, greasiest, and most common description. The tables were destitute of cloths, and the knives and forks were chained to the table to prevent their being abstracted by the patrons of the establishment, in whose integrity and firmness of moral purpose, the spirited proprietor did not appear to have much faith. There was a general appearance of grease about the place, as if the room had once been used as a dripping-pan in the kitchen of some castle belonging to a family of giants. The walls were unctuous, and the flooring as slippery as a sheet of ice. The wall in some places had been leant against and blackened into a high state of polish, and on one of these spots, a notification, had been chalked up to the effect that gentlemen frequenting the coffee-house of Mr. Harris, could be accommodated with a steak for the small sum of sixpence,—the dimensions of the steak were not stated—and that chops could be obtained for fivepence, and inferior ones from the neck for threepence, bread extra. All other articles were stated to be retailed at moderate prices.

Girling was not over fastidious, but he was very nearly turning on his heel and going away, when he saw what a poor, poverty-stricken, dirty place he had unknowingly entered, but as he put his hand in his pocket, and found that he had very few shillings to chink together, he did violence to his feelings, took a seat by the side of a gormandizing sweep, who was devouring his cheap neck-chop with evident gusto, and beckoned to a man in what had once been a white apron, though it now required a stretch of the imagination to make you believe that it had ever been anything but what it was at present. This individual was the waiter, proprietor, and sometimes cook—that is when the partner of his existence, the wife of his bosom, who was a strong-minded and indomitable female, became angry and refused to labour any longer at the culinary art, which flourished over a gridiron in the lower regions. He was also his own pot-boy, and ran round the corner with alacrity to fulfil the orders of his thirsty customers, who were not content with the milk-and-water stuff he gave them, and with mendacious instinct called coffee.

Coffee! You might as well have thrown hot water upon brewers' grains and called the colourless liquid beer.

Mrs. Harris was not a favourite with the frequenters of the house. She was colossal in her figure, menacing in her gestures, and loud in her voice. She had been known to chastise a red-headed butcher-boy who went by the name of Rufus. She punished him summarily with her fists, and then propelled him gracefully with her dexter foot into the street, because he had been rash enough to caricature her on the whitewash of the wall with a piece of charcoal.

Girling ordered some humble fare, and took another

look at his chimney-sweeping friend, who had come to dinner *au naturel*, that is, he had not taken the trouble to go home and wash himself. He wore whiskers, and they were positively heavy with soot. Girling thanked goodness that it was warm weather, for had it been the middle of winter, and had the man been seized with a sudden shiver, he would have shaken the dusky particles about in a shower, like that caused by the blacks from the chimney of a flaring camphine lamp.

To his intense satisfaction he was not kept long waiting, and to his surprise the meat he had ordered was as tender as a chicken, and cooked to perfection. This, then, was the charm of Harris's—this was the gastronomic chain which bound sweep and beggar, tramp and coster to Harris. They did not care about Harris simply because he was Harris. There was no personal regard; but he appealed at once to their stomachs and their pockets—he was good and he was cheap, and they were grateful.

When the gormandizing sweep had eaten the last remnant of his third neck-chop, he had the appearance of being gorged, and he walked out of the house with a slow step, and as solemn as if he could not have cried "Weep, weep!" to save his life.

The knives and forks were of an ancient make and pattern. The forks were like those used for haymaking, long and prongy. The knives were black handled and very blunt, which was a pity, as the frequenters of Harris's were often heard to say that their time was their money. As the knives and forks were lifted up, the chains attached to them rattled clangingly against the plates, and made a sound as of wild, savage, uncouth music, rather inspiring if you would only understand it, and enter into the spirit of its uncultivated roughness.

There was an old newspaper on one of the tables. It was one of those delectable prints which appear on a Saturday, and are called Sunday papers. Devoted chiefly to the dissemination of police intelligence and the vices of the aristocracy, political reform, extension of the franchise, the adoption of the ballot, and subjects which the editors handle in a style of fiery indignation, and prophesy that a day of terrible retribution and awful vengeance is not far distant, when the noble fortitude and the persevering patience of the much-enduring sons of the soil shall be rewarded.

Girling took up the paper, and glanced his eye over a poetical contribution beginning:

Oh! sound, Evangel, sound. Awake! awake!

Arise ye cravens, and your letters break!

when he caught sight of a paragraph which conveyed the startling intelligence of the Earl of Brandon's illness.

It stated that the unfortunate nobleman had not yet shown any symptoms of recovering from the effects of his late accident, and that he still lay in a most precarious state.

Girling was annoyed at this intelligence. He had hoped to make use of him when Lady Brandon had been driven to despair, or he would have played off one against the other. In any case the earl's death would have been a serious misfortune for him. He was not aware, of course, that Lady Brandon was married. He supposed her to be with the earl at Kirkdale Priory, where the paper informed him the earl was lying between life and death.

He saw at once that his best course would be to go directly to Kirkdale and have an interview with her ladyship, but it was out of his power to do so. He had no money. He guessed that the lowest fare to the midland counties in which Kirkdale Priory was situated would be little short of a pound, and he was without the fourth of such a sum in his possession. In his excitement he exclaimed aloud:

"I would give anything in the world for a couple of pounds!"

"Would you?" exclaimed a strange voice at his elbow.

Girling dropped the paper, and, looking down, saw a little grey-headed man who had taken possession of the seat vacated by the sweep. There was a mischievous twinkle in his hard grey eyes, and a sarcastic smile about his lips. He was dressed plainly, but respectably. At times he grinned and showed a set of teeth which were wonderfully well-preserved for a man of his age. He was hardly five feet high and spare in his figure, but oddly enough, he gave one the idea of great strength. He seemed to be one wiry mass of sinews and muscular fibres. There was not an ounce of superfluous flesh anywhere about him. He might have been taken for an athlete in training for a foot-race or a rowing match or a wrestling encounter.

Girling was too much astonished at his abrupt question to reply at once. So, with one of the peculiar grins which seemed to be habitual to him, the old man continued:

"So you want a couple of pounds, do you? And you would give anything in the world for it?" Then

he went on as if talking to himself. "Anything in the world! Why, what's he got to give? If I asked him for one of his teeth, or his coat, or his little finger, he'd say 'no.'"

"Were you speaking to me?" asked Girling.
"To you? yes. Who else do you think I was speaking to? You want two pounds?"

"Since you heard me say so, it is useless to deny it."

"Fancy a man wanting two pounds? God bless me! what's the world coming to? A strong, healthy, clever young fellow wanting two pounds. Well, things are altered since my young days."

Girling felt offended at the little old man's garrulity, and sulkily picked up his paper again; but the old man snatched it out of his hand and laid it on the table, saying:

"I always exact a little politeness, even at Harris's."

Girling felt inclined to resent what he considered an insult, in some way or other, but the old man had grey hairs, and it would have been a cowardly thing to attack a man whose hair is tinged with the silver of old age.

The little old man patted Girling on the arm in a gentle way, as he would have done in soothing a child, and said:

"Send for a pint of porter, and you shall have the two pounds."

When he heard this request Girling could not help smiling, for he thought he had discovered the reason of the old man's sudden friendship. He looked upon his offer of the two pounds as a clever device to obtain something to drink. So he replied:

"If you have two pounds you are rich enough to buy a pint of porter."

"Logical, but silly," answered the old man, "order the porter."

As the sum involved was only a small one, Girling did as he was requested, and said:

"Where is the money?"

"When do you want it?"

"To-day."

"What for?"

"How can that interest you?" asked Girling, getting tired of what he thought an absurd adventure.

"It does interest me, and I must know."

"I want to go into the country."

"From what station?"

"Euston Square."

"I will meet you on the departure platform in two hours from this time," exclaimed the little old man, rising from his seat. "In the mean time, good-bye. Mind, two hours from this time. Be there, and you shall have the money."

The next moment he was gone.

"Well!" exclaimed Girling. "This is the most extraordinary thing that ever happened to me. I wonder if he can be in earnest. I should think not. It is not likely that he has so much money at his command, and if he has, it is preposterous to suppose that he would lend it to a perfect stranger."

Seeing the landlord go by, Girling stopped him, and said:

"Who is that little old gentleman who was talking to me just now?"

"Very singular character, sir," replied the man.

"Do you know his name?"

"No, I do not, sir. Goes by a nickname here. Call him the 'Slomakin.' Don't know why. I have heard say as he was a lawyer's clerk."

"Does he live about here?"

"Not aware that he does, sir. He's not a regular customer of ours, but often looks in promiscuously for a chop or a steak, which he knows is as good here as at any other shop in London, or even Paris, which I've been told is a first-rate place for cooks and cookery."

"Thank you," replied Girling, who fell into a state of meditation, from which he did not emerge until he heard a clock strike.

He started up. Some time had elapsed, and if he were to meet the "Slomakin," as that eccentric person had directed him, it was necessary that he should go at once.

Putting on his hat, he paid his score, and left Harris's, curious to know whether or not he should find himself made a fool of, if he went to the station.

However, he made up his mind to go, and walked briskly in the direction of Euston Square.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Another guest there was of sense refined,
Who felt each worth—for every worth he had,
Serenely warm, humane yet firm his mind,
As little tinged as any man's with bad.

Castle of Indolence.

SIR LAWRENCE ALLINGFORD and the Count de Cannes felt that they were constrained by the usages of society to stay at Kirkdale until the Earl of Braun-

don was either given over by his physician or pronounced convalescent. This was against the wishes of both of them.

The Count de Cannes wished to remove to some other locality, for many reasons. In the first place, he had a presentiment that it would be better for him to do so, and whenever this uneasy feeling attacked him, he had no peace until he had obeyed the secret promptings and the mysterious dictates of his hidden monitor.

In addition to this, he had nothing to stay in the country for. He had acquired a large sum of money and jewellery through his burglarious attempt upon the earl's dressing-case, and he was positive that no information of the robbery had as yet been given to the police, because the earl had never been sufficiently conscious to attend to his affairs or give orders to those about him. Consequently, the notes which the count had abstracted were not stopped at the Bank, although they might be any day, and it was therefore extremely important for De Cannes to go up to town and turn the paper into money.

Sir Lawrence was desirous of leaving Kirkdale, mainly because he wanted to pursue Lady Brandon, and revenge himself upon her by denouncing her to Reginald Welby, and causing a separation between her and her husband; but, like his friend, he continued at the Priory, for the sake of appearances. As the days went past the count fumed and fretted, and in his impatience, exclaimed to the baronet:

"Although I feel deeply regretful about the earl's state, I cannot remain much longer here. My affairs are being neglected and ruined. To-day is Thursday. I shall leave the country next Tuesday morning."

"And then?" asked Sir Lawrence.

"With you," returned the count, "there is always an 'And then?'" It is always necessary to give you a plan of the campaign. Well, I shall go abroad again."

"Where?"

"There you puzzle me. I know no more than a baby. They sell good opium at Smyrna, but Turkey, since the Crimean war, has become so disgustingly English, that I dislike it. If I go to the Levant, I come in contact with Greeks, get robbed, and have to drink bad wine. What is there for a traveller in these days to do? I really think I shall go to China."

"I thought you had half-pledged yourself to me," exclaimed Sir Lawrence Allingford, reproachfully.

"To you!"

"Yes."

"In what way?"

"Why, simply in this way. Miss Zedfern was walking in the garden a short time ago, and suggested that we should scour the continent together, in search of Lady Blanche Welby."

He smiled bitterly as he pronounced her wedded name.

"Ah, I remember. Thanks for putting me in mind of a circumstance which had totally escaped my memory," returned De Cannes, complacently stroking his moustache.

"Will you accompany me?" asked the baronet, anxiously. "I had considered the affair almost settled, as you made no objection at the time."

"You will always find me a man of my word. I do not see why we should not go together; it is best for people to run in couples. You avoid dangerous society, and when anything of importance is to be done, two heads are always better than one. Yes, I will go, with pleasure. Consider it an arranged affair. We will leave the Priory on Tuesday morning by daybreak, and go straight to Paris. Everyone goes through Paris, and there we shall hear of your faithless lady-love. I begin to like the idea. It will be a chase, and there is excitement in a chase, more especially when the fox you hunt is cunning, subtle, and knows how to double upon you."

Sir Lawrence Allingford shook the count cordially by the hand, saying, in a gratified voice:

"You shall see some day how much I appreciate your kindness and good-nature. I don't think I should have had courage enough to go alone. I am so prostrated by the unexpected nature of one or two events which have lately happened, that I am not myself exactly."

"Rely upon me in all emergencies. I am your friend," said the count, returning the pressure of the hand with equal cordiality.

"I think I shall amuse myself by fishing for an hour. Will you come?" continued the count.

Sir Lawrence shook his head sadly, and the count proceeded to the water by himself. He found one of the water bailiffs near the boat-house, and he was supplied by him with a rod and line, ground bait and a box of gentles, a jar of worms in moss, through which the little reptiles scoured themselves clean. With these he embarked in a boat, and moored it under some trees, whose shade afforded a protection to the heat of the sun, and secured him against its scorch-

ing rays. He had excellent sport, for the perch and roach were voracious.

Suddenly he heard a clear, ringing voice calling him by name. Looking up, he perceived Mimi standing on the opposite shore.

"Come over and fetch me," she said. "I want to speak to you, and I will promise not to spoil your fishing."

Setting down his tackle, De Cannes took up the sculls, and rowing across, allowed Mimi to embark. She settled herself comfortably in the stern, and said:

"Pull back again to where you were. It is a nice quiet place, and I think we shall be free from interruption."

The count did so; but he did not evince much inclination for continuing his sport. He allowed the fishing-rod to remain untouched at the bottom of the boat, and carelessly lighting a cigar, said:

"Now I am ready for you."

"And I for you," replied Mimi. "How distant and business-like we always are. No one would ever take us for brother and sister, would they?"

"You are fond of chattering to-day," said the count, looking round uneasily.

"Oh! never mind, no one can hear us."

"I don't know that."

The count facially was not like Mimi, but there was a great deal in their characters which was similar. They were both cunning, both audacious, both ambitious, and both fond of money.

"How did I manage affairs the other night?" asked the count.

"Admirably. You always do things well," replied Mimi.

He smiled at her enthusiastic praise.

"Do you like precious stones?" he said.

"Very much."

"And diamonds?"

"I am passionately fond of them."

"That's fortunate, for I have a very choice assortment for you to choose from."

"With you?"

"Why, no," he answered with a smile. "I am not in the habit of carrying such costly merchandises about with me. I have been taking your future into consideration lately, Mimi," he added.

"That's right. I want a little fraternal advice. It is not often you favour me with your guardianship."

"Through your suggestion," he said, "I have done tolerably well down here, and when I get to London I can afford to send you a cheque on my bankers for ten thousand pounds."

"That is my share, I suppose," she exclaimed, interrupting him.

"Exactly. And you must admit that I behave handsomely and with liberality. That sum invested safely at four per cent. will bring you in four hundred a year. With that to help you, you ought to make your fortune."

"I will do my best," she replied, with a gratified air, "but"—she continued, as a thought struck her.

"Well," he ejaculated.

"You are a bird of passage. You are here to-day and gone to-morrow. What guarantee have I of your fulfilling your promise to me?"

"A proverb says that there is honour amongst a certain class of people."

"I doubt it," replied Mimi.

"I have only one wish and that is to please you," said De Cannes. "You can help yourself to my diamonds, but you will have some difficulty in disposing of them. You had much better leave all that to me, but by all means please yourself."

"You should have been a barrister, you state the case so clearly. I consent to leave it to you, and I rely upon your honour, which I should think is something like the standard of a regiment that has gone through many engagements. Just the least bit dilapidated."

"The least bit! It is torn to tatters, my dear Mimi; but still the scrap that is left of it shall hold my pledge to you sacred," exclaimed De Cannes.

"Do you leave here soon?"

"Shortly. Sir Lawrence Allingford and I are to hunt down my Lady Blanche."

"Oh, that is good news! I hate her and —"

"You love Welby, I suppose?" put in the count.

Her face grew red, and in an angry voice, she said:

"I am not more than mortal. If I admit that I do love him, where is the harm? What wrong am I doing?"

"The only wrong that I can see is the wrong you do yourself in cherishing a hopeless passion."

"If it is hopeless," she cried, fiercely, "who made it so? Oh, I would give ten years of my life to humble and humiliate that woman; and make her thoroughly wretched and miserable! I should like to see her kneeling at my feet, supplicating for pardon. I would not extend to her—pleading for mercy which I would not show her. I should like to see her writhing in the dust, in all the bitter, biting agony of

a proud spirit brought down and crushed irretrievably! I would spurn her with my foot, and tell her that from me, at least, she would derive no pity. I feel like a tigress when I think of that woman, and you could do me no better service than to ruin her. I do not know Sir Lawrence's power over her, but they were mixed up together in many ways, and he evidently knows something which would create a separation between Welby and herself. Let him do this. If his energies flag, stimulate them; if his spirit fails him, let it be your work and your business to incite it anew. If his love should conquer him and incline him to pity her, inflame his mind and make a wild beast of him. Do this and I will bless you for ever!"

She became eloquent while speaking, and looked positively beautiful, as her whole frame trembled with suppressed passion.

"Very pretty," cried the count; "very pretty indeed!"

He rather admired his impetuous sister when she was in a passion.

"Hush!" exclaimed Mimi; "did you hear anything?"

"Nothing."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"That is odd: I could have sworn that I heard somebody lurking amongst the bushes and rustling the leaves."

"The wind, Mimi; you are nervous."

"I believe I am. Put me on shore now. Alice Welby is waiting for me at the Priory. We just ran over to leave a card. I inquired for you, and heard that you were indulging in some pastoral pursuit congenial to your nature; and having, as you now know, a wish to see you about my share of the plunder, I ran down to the lake, and was fortunate enough to find you."

"I shall walk back with you," said De Cannes; "I have fished long enough."

As they rounded the corner of the lake and passed by the boat-house, they perceived a man getting over the palings which enclosed the plantation at the side of the water. They were both unacquainted with his features, and walked quickly in order to see in which direction he went, and discover, if possible, who he was, and what his business in the plantation might be.

"I told you I heard a rustling," Mimi exclaimed.

"It does not follow that it was caused by that man, and if it was, and granting that he overheard every word of our conversation, I defy him to make much out of it."

"You were not always so careless," she said, with a gesture of dissent.

"Nor am I careless now; far from it; but I am not a school-girl to think a shadow a ghost, and run away with a startled shriek."

They continued their walk in silence, and were preceded every inch of the way to the Priory by the stranger, who walked quickly along. The front door usually stood open in hot weather, and he passed under the portico and into the house as if he were fully entitled to do so.

A servant was crossing the hall, and De Cannes inquired if he knew the gentleman who had just entered.

"Yes, sir," replied the footman; "gentleman from London—name of Littleboy—solicitor to the earl, I believe."

"Littleboy—solicitor," repeated the count. "Bring me the Post-office directory."

"Yes, sir."

When the book arrived the count put it on a chair, and bending down, turned over the leaves, while Mimi looked over his shoulder.

"There it is," she exclaimed. "George Littleboy, solicitor, Bartlett's Buildings."

"At your service," uttered a voice at her elbow.

She turned round in some confusion, and encountered the gaze of the stranger fixed upon her.

He was a man of about forty years of age—thick-set—not tall, without whiskers or moustache, possessing a keen eye and a good-natured smile, evidently a sharp man of business. He wore a diamond ring on his finger, and had the appearance of being well-to-do in the world.

With admirable self-possession, the count addressed the solicitor, and said:

"I am delighted, Mr. Littleboy, that you have thought fit to come down from town."

"Why, sir, may I ask?" replied the solicitor.

"Because, my dear sir, I was about to telegraph for you. The precarious state of my poor friend Brandon makes it necessary that his legal adviser should be within call, for lucid moments may occur when legal matters can be attended to. It is always so satisfactory to have a professional man at hand in such emergencies. My friend Allingford, with whom you are doubtless acquainted, suggested that we should send for a country practitioner, but I have no faith in them. If you are to have any dealings with men of the long

robe, go to the fountain-head. Have I made myself comprehensible?"

"Perfectly so," replied Mr. George Littleboy. "I heard of the earl's accident through the medium of a newspaper, and after waiting a day or two I took it upon myself to come down."

"And permit me to say that you did very right, sir, very right indeed. I am proud to know a man who does not shrink his responsibility."

"May I ask to whom I am talking?"

"The Count de Cannes."

"De Cannes! In the French peerage, I presume?"

"In the French peerage."

"The countess?" inquired Mr. Littleboy, with a wave of the hand towards Mimi, who was watching the verbal encounter between the two.

"Oh, dear no. A friend of the family—Miss Zedfern."

"Ah! Excuse me."

"Fond of the country?" asked De Cannes.

"No, count; don't care much about it."

"Did I not see you just now taking a slight stroll?"

"Possibly. I went down as far as the lake, and lost myself in a plantation."

"Oh! indeed!" remarked the count.

Mimi made De Cannes a sign to come away, and he added:

"We shall meet at dinner."

He bowed elaborately, and the lawyer was not slow to return his salutation in a manner equally punctilious.

The count and Mimi sought the retirement of the morning-room, and when there, looked blankly at one another.

It was certainly odd that Mr. Littleboy should have taken a walk by the side of the lake. Mimi was persuaded that the lawyer must have overheard her conversation with the count, or at least part of it. When he came to ask how the earl's accident happened, and heard all about the robbery from the garrulous Mr. Webster, he would, with professional skill, put two and two together, and discover the sum total made by their union.

The count's reference to diamonds, and her own observation about her share of the plunder would, she felt sure, not be lost upon Mr. Littleboy. Again, it would strike him as singular that they should be so anxious to discover his name and address. She did not like the aspect of affairs at all, and begged De Cannes to conciliate him while he stopped, and to leave the Priory as soon as he could with decency, with both of which requests the count promised to comply.

They had not much time for talking or arranging a plan of action, for De Cannes had only just time to answer Mimi that he would send her the promised ten thousand pounds in less than a week, when Alice Welby pushed open the door, and exclaimed:

"Oh! you are here, Mimi! I have been looking everywhere for you. Is it not time to go home?"

"I am ready when you are," answered Mimi.

Miss Welby shook hands with the count, who, in a careless tone, asked if she had yet heard from her brother or his wife.

"Once, and once only," she replied; "and then he dated his letter from Gibraltar, stating that he should leave the rock in a day or two and tour through Spain."

The count made a note of the information.

Meanwhile, Mr. George Littleboy walked up-stairs to the bedroom which had been given him. He found Mrs. Cob superintending various arrangements, such as the distribution of clean linen. She bowed when she saw who had disturbed her, begged him not to go away, as she would only be a minute, and in reply as to what she thought of her master's condition she exclaimed:

"Oh! poor dear gentleman—leastways, nobleman, I should say—it is pretty high all over with him, sir. Doctors is no good, parsons is no good, lawyers is no good, asking your pardon, sir, for making so bold."

"But the earl, my dear madame—the earl!" exclaimed Mr. Littleboy, recalling the talkative old lady to herself.

She shook her head solemnly and replied:

"I was a coming to his lordship all in good time, sir, but we poor country folks aint got express tongues, as a body may say—tongues as will come up with and beat a mail coach. We leaves that, sir, to the lawyers, barristers, and such, which they do do it beautiful at the assizes, for a good case brings them out and sets them a going for hours, for all the world like a bit of clock-work, which has been fresh wound up, and the thing duly placed on a nail by the side of the mantelpiece, which, with me, sir, is always its accustomed place for hanging. Excuse me, sir, but where was I? oh! the earl. Yes, Well, sir, yesterday was a week—no, a fortnight, when Mr. Webster he come to me, and we were talk-

ing cosy-like, when the awfulest tempest that ever shook the blessed trees out of the ground, and tore them up roots and all, burst over the Priory, and I was that upset I was ill for days, having to send over to the village, by one of the men, for a box of Cocker's best Antibilious, my last being empty and not one left."

"But the earl, Mrs. Cob?" pleaded Mr. Littleboy.

"I was telling you. Now, one of the oaks in the earl's girdle was blown down, and that's a sure sign of the death of an Earl of Brandon. I spoke to Mr. Webster, and he in his rash way, which it ill becomes a man of his age to do it, laughed in my face, and walked back into his pantry, and said he should go and clean his plate, but he had a glass of the earl's old Mader, for I heard the cork pop, and I could tell the smell of it—yes, if it was miles off. I don't wish to say anything injurious about a man behind his back—no, nor a woman either—but if so be as Mr. Webster was standing on that carpet, sir, just near that tiger lily and that rose, which it's the pattern of the carpet, sir, and not real flowers that I'm talking of, I'd repeat my words and let him contradict them if he can."

"But the earl?"

"One moment, sir; as I was saying, yesterday was a fortnight when the oak fell down, and yesterday was a week when the earl was took, that is to say, when he broke his leg."

"Broke his leg, did he. How was that?" inquired Mr. Littleboy.

"Why, you see, sir, there was a robbery. Only me and Mr. Webster and the count knows it. It aint got about yet, and the earl he followed the thief into the park and got caught by the leg in a steel trap, such as they catch poachers in, sir, which it's a melancholy fact and doesn't say much for the civilization of the age we live in."

Finding that he had extracted all he could from Mrs. Cob, the lawyer opened a small valise he always carried with him, and took from it a parcel of books. Untying this, he selected one bound in calf, and having French words on the outside.

"Thanks to my precaution in taking my useful library with me, I am not at a loss for information when I want it," he muttered, as he turned over the leaves. "A, B, C, Ca, that's it, Cannery, Carnival, Carnise, Carnay. Ah! as I thought," he continued, "this is the latest edition of the authorised French Peerage, and in it there is no such name as Count de Cannes. Let us try once more to make sure. Ca—Can—no. I am right. No such name. That is important. Who and what, then, is the Count de Cannes?"

Fortunately for the count, Mr. Littleboy had not overheard his conversation with Mimi; he had only neared the boat at the far-end of it, and merely listened to a few disjointed words, of which he could not make much. But he was a wonderful man for doing what is sometimes called 'worrying' a thing. He would look at each case that came before him in every possible light, and if any one in London or Westminster could unravel a tangled skein, that man was George Littleboy of Bartlett's Buildings.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Till overhead a sheet
Of livid flame discloses wide—then shuts
And opens wider; shuts and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze.

Thomson.

Most railway stations are alike, and that towards which William Girling bent his steps did not differ much from any other. Cabs were continually arriving, and luggage was being wheeled here, and carted there, and labelled in another place; and there was a refreshment-room, where people drank scalding soup and bad sherry and indifferent beer, and ate hard chickens and salt hams, and tough tongues, and triumphs of the pastrycook art, in the shape of Bath buns, looking glossy and sticky, and bristling with sugar-plums, such as make glad the hearts of children. There was a book-stall and a newspaper stall, and a boy with a hoarse voice and an important delivery, who shouted in your ears, to the terror of nervous people inclined to be deaf, and another boy who spoke clearer and told awful fictions, such as that there was news from America, when the steamer expected was yet miles from Queenstown.

Girling took no notice of anything; he walked to the departure platform and looked anxiously around for the Slomakin. A harsh chuckle rang in his ear, and turning his head, he saw that the individual in question had sprung up out of the wooden platform, as it were; at least, so it appeared to his excited fancy, which was inclined to attribute something supernatural to the little old man with the gray hair and muscular development. The sober truth being that he had been sitting quietly on a bench, and being small, had escaped Girling's notice.

"Hold out your hand," said the man.



[GIRLING'S ATTACK ANTICIPATED.]

Girling did so, and two sovereigns were immediately placed within his palm.

"There, have I kept my promise?"

"You have," Girling replied, with a shudder, which he could not repress, owing to his recollections of stories respecting enchanters and soul bargainers, and the like.

He walked away quickly, wishing that he could give his new acquaintance the slip, and devoutly hoping that the train would start immediately.

On making the necessary inquiries, he found that a train for Kirkdale was on the point of starting. Going to the ticket-counter, he threw down his two sovereigns and said:

"Second, single, Kirkdale."

"The mail train, sir?" asked the clerk.

"The next train that goes."

"Right sir. One, seven, six."

Girling picked up his change and looked round for the old man, who, to his surprise, had taken his position at the box, and was saying:

"Second, single, Kirkdale."

"I have a ticket!" exclaimed Girling.

"Yes. I am aware of the fact; but I am getting one for myself."

"You?"

"Why not? Of course we travel together."

"Now then, gentlemen, this way for the mail train! Take your seats, gentlemen! Any more for the mail train?" shouted a guard.

Hardly knowing what he did, or whether he was going, William Girling led the way to the platform, closely followed by the Slomakin, who pried into the carriages until he found an empty one. Giving the guard half-a-crown, he whispered:

"Keep the carriage for us."

The guard nodded his head.

Girling jumped in. The old man took a place opposite him. The whistle sounded. The train moved, and they were soon leaving the platform.

"Where is the first stoppage?" asked the Slomakin, putting his head out of the window and addressing a porter.

"First stoppage is Rugby, sir."

"Come, that's comfortable," said the old man, as a commentary on the porter's reply. "Eighty miles from London to Rugby. Two hours travelling at a stretch at the rate of forty miles an hour, is not bad. Not at all bad."

Girling closed his eyes, as if he was desirous of shutting out some hideous vision.

"Can I offer you a cigar?" continued his travelling companion, taking a cigar out of his pocket and hold-

ing it out to Girling, who, however, refused the proffered tobacco, saying he felt too ill to smoke.

The Slomakin speedily lighted a cigar, and in a short time the aromatic vapour was pervading the atmosphere of the carriage.

Girling was seriously perplexed. He wondered who and what the little old man was, and why he persisted in travelling with him. The more he thought the more alarmed he grew, for he dreaded something, he knew not what.

There is at all times something horrible in the idea of being shut up with a person whom you do not know, and who may be disposed to do you an injury, whilst it is out of your power to help yourself or call for assistance.

Girling was in an express train, that did not stop for two hours, whirling along at the rate of forty miles an hour. There was no means of communicating with the guard, and he was by no means satisfied as to the sanity of the little old man, whose conduct had been of an extraordinary if not a suspicious nature ever since Girling had met with him.

There was only one circumstance upon which Girling could congratulate himself, and that was, that through his strange friend's instrumentality, he was able to visit Kirkdale: for had it not been for his timely gift of money, he would have been put to much inconvenience and delay before he could have accomplished the journey, if he had done it at all.

The train rolled about, as express trains are apt to do when going at speed, and the windows rattled in their frames with that anything but melodious noise to which all second-class travellers must be accustomed.

The motion of the train seemed to exhilarate the old man very much. He walked about from one side of the carriage to the other, and laughed to himself, as if he was contemplating something which gave him great delight. Stopping opposite Girling, he exclaimed:

"Did you ever hear of the Temple of Diana at Ephesus?"

Girling confessed his ignorance.

"Well, I'll tell you. It was burnt down, and so one of the wonders of the world was lost to future generations. Why did the incendiary burn it down? To make himself famous for ever. Perhaps you don't know his name."

"No."

"Then I do. They called him Herostratus. Long name, isn't it? He found he could not make himself immortal in any other way, and so he burned down the temple. How would you like to be immortal?"

"I am not ambitious," replied Girling.

"I am; there's the difference. Now, I have an idea."

"What is it?" inquired Girling, falling in with the humour of his companion, and thinking it best to do so.

"Oh, it's a grand idea—a sublime idea—it'll make me famous, sir!"

The old man rubbed his hands together and appeared intensely pleased for a long time.

"We're in the third carriage after the engine and tender."

"Well?"

"Now, if anything were to happen to this carriage—"

"Happen! What do you mean?" cried Girling, in an agony of apprehension.

"Suppose it were to catch fire, for instance."

"You cannot mean—"

"Listen to what I say. If this carriage were to catch fire, the two before it would hide the flames from the engine people, who have their faces to the front. Going at the pace we are progressing at, the whole train would be on fire in less than thirty minutes. I will defy the driver to stop the train under ten minutes, consequently—"

Girling jumped up with determination flashing from his eyes, and clenching his fists, stood over the old man, exclaiming:

"Now, look here, you are either mad or a fool, and if you attempt to stir from that seat while I fasten your hands behind your back, you must be prepared to take the consequences."

For an instant the little old man cowered beneath Girling's fiery glance, and sat perfectly still and motionless. Thinking he had subdued him, Girling felt in his pocket for a bit of rope or string, but while he was doing so, the Slomakin sprang to his feet, and dealt Girling a tremendous blow between the eyes, which knocked him to the bottom of the carriage. His head struck the seat in its descent, and he was stunned.

Having satisfied himself of this fact, the old man chuckled in his wild way, and produced a bundle of tow, which he undid, and pulled out into a heap of fluffy matter.

The train still tore along in its impetuous course, and the landscape faded like a dissolving view. Trees, cattle, farms, homesteads, cottages, disappeared like lightning, giving place to fresh objects of a similar nature.

Girling did not stir hand or foot. He appeared to be much injured.

(To be continued.)



THE FATAL SECRET.

CHAPTER XIX.

The frenzy of the brain may be redressed
By medicine well applied; but
The heart's insanity admits no cure. *Couper.*

WHEN Somerton heard of the improvement in Isola's health, he loudly expressed his delight at the success of his prescription, and went himself to the Vale to visit her, carrying with him a fresh supply of his invaluable medicine.

He was surprised at the marked change in her appearance, and congratulated her on her return to health, at the same time claiming the merit of her convalescence. She thanked him, and smilingly said:

"Yes, your drops have had a magical effect, but they must be different from those you gave me before I left home. They oppressed me with a sense of failure and sinking, but these have removed that feeling, and, thanks to your skill, I am nearly restored to my usual health."

With ready tact he replied:

"When I found the first prescription did not suit your constitution, I changed the medicine. But you must have used all you took away with you, and I have brought you a fresh supply."

"Thank you; I shall need it, I have no doubt, and I shall not fail to take it regularly till I am quite well."

"That will be best; but how long will it be before you return to Fountains? Savella is not in good spirits, and I think she misses you very much."

"She has not been over for several days, and father told me that she is indisposed. I am sorry to hear that she is not well, but I have promised to remain here till the close of this week, and unless Savella is seriously ill, I should prefer doing so."

Fanny remained near her friend while she talked with Somerton, for, in spite of his specious manners and assumed piety, she cherished an intuitive feeling of dread and mistrust toward him. She quickly said:

"I will go over and look after Savella myself. You must not leave us, Isola, till you are entirely well. I think grandma's bitters have done you quite as much good as the drops, highly as Mr. Somerton thinks of them."

He thanked her for her offer to visit Savella, and turning to Isola, said in a low voice:

"I hope you have not been induced to take any nostrums compounded by a person ignorant of medi-

[THE VISION THAT HAUNTED CLAUDE FONTAINE.]

cine. In your condition, it is very dangerous to hazard such a thing."

"I have only taken a small quantity of the bitters every morning, to please Fanny; but your medicine I use three times every day, as you enjoined me."

"Can you let me see those bitters? Excuse me, but I am particularly opposed to any one tampering with a patient of mine."

"Certainly—I will bring the bottle to you."

"Thank you. Here are the fresh drops. Now you are accustomed to their use, I think you may increase the quantity one-third. Remember to be very accurate, for they are dangerous if taken in excess."

"I will be very careful," and she was rising to go on her errand, when Fanny, who had managed to overhear what he had said, in spite of his cautious tone, prevented her.

"Sit still, Isola; you are not yet strong enough to run up and down stairs. I will bring the bottle myself."

She presently returned, and presented it to Somerton as she said:

"It is only a tonic, which Isola needs. If you wish to stand well with grandma, you had better say nothing against her pet medicine."

"This seems innocent enough. It is only brandy poured on bitter herbs; yet, with a tendency to inward fever, it may prove injurious to Isola. I would advise her to take only the life elixir I have prepared for her myself."

"I will do so, if you wish it," and Isola took the phial he offered her; Fanny held out her hand for it, and said:

"I will take it up and put it on your toilette, where it will be safe from accidents. I can fancy Mr. Somerton's consternation if the precious flask was broken and its contents spilled."

"It would indeed be a sad accident," he impressively replied; "for its contents are worth more than their weight in gold."

Fanny took the phial in her hand and pretended to regard it with reverential admiration.

"Is it distilled from gold?" she asked. "I have read of such an elixir, and the man that made it believed that its use would render him immortal."

"No, I do not pretend to such skill as that. This is a chemical compound, the secret of which is known only to myself and one other, a distinguished Italian chemist, from whom I learned to prepare it."

"Really! the joint product of two wise heads should be carefully kept. It should be put up in a flask of Venice glass, for that I believe is considered most precious in the country of your instructor."

Fanny looked him full in the eyes as she spoke these apparently random words; but she was not ignorant of the famous Venetian goblets, which tradition states would shiver into fragments if a poisoned draught was poured into them.

Somerton was too good a diplomatist to be embarrassed by a mere girl; he shrugged his shoulders and quietly said:

"In the days of the Borgias there was good use for such things; but we have fallen on better times, and even in Italy precautions against poison are now considered superfluous. There is nothing deleterious in my elixir, Miss Berkeley, as the amended health of your friend proves."

"Pardon me, Mr. Somerton; I did not accuse you of so deadly an abuse of your medical skill," said Fanny gravely; and she moved away, carrying the phial in her hand.

A servant offered to take both that and the larger bottle, but she only gave the latter to her, and went herself into her chamber; after locking the door, she poured the precious elixir into an empty bottle and filled Isola's with water. This was placed upon the dressing-stand, and the genuine drops borne off, while she muttered:

"I may judge him wrongfully; but I am determined to be satisfied about it. I will get Dr. Sinclair to analyze these, and find out of what so precious an article is composed."

Unluckily for her purpose, the phial slipped through her damp fingers and shattered into fragments upon the floor, its contents spattering over the carpet. With an expression of dismay at the failure of her project, Fanny snatched a towel and hastily wiped up the stains, fearing some one might detect what she had done. She thought:

"At the worst, I can speak to Isola and tell her of my suspicions more plainly than I have yet dared to do. Oh, how I do wish we could keep her here, where I know she is safe. Poor George; now she has answered his letter, if anything should happen to her, it would be almost a death-blow to him."

On Somerton's return to Fountains, his accomplice sought an opportunity to speak with him alone, and she eagerly asked:

"Is it really true that Isola is recovering?"

"She certainly appears to be rapidly improving."

"Yet you assured me that the medicine she took with her would keep up the slow decay that was consuming her life?"

"I cannot understand it," he replied. "She assures me that she takes it regularly, yet she is regaining her health. Some constitutions assimilate poisons

after a certain portion has been infused into the system. Hers must be one of that class, though I did not believe the vital principle could be so strong in a person as delicately organized as Isola is. However, all will be right now; I have made the drops I took to her to-day much stronger than the last, and I ordered the quantity taken to be increased. We must get rid of her, for the will is actually made which gives her ten thousand pounds, and Fontaine went yesterday and signed it."

"How do you know that?"

"I saw the draft of it on his table, with the letter to his lawyer. You know that I accompanied him and, while there, he spent two hours in the office of Mr. Winston. It was easy enough for me to comprehend what his business was."

"How angry he would be if he knew that you enter into his sanctum in his absence and pry into everything there?"

"He will never know it," Somerton indifferently replied. "If we can only prevent Savella from making a fool of herself, we shall soon grasp the reward of all our toils."

"Leave that to me; I never lose sight of her long enough to give her a chance to play me any trick. She has made several attempts to send a letter to Philip Vane, but I have baffled them all. I have one of the precious *morceaux* in my possession, and such a silly, love-sick effusion, I did not believe even Savella would write to a man she has known but two months."

"She springs from a passionate race, so what else can you expect? She has hitherto been permitted to have no association with young persons of the opposite sex, and of course she fell in love with the first handsome man who talked sweet nonsense to her."

"And for this lip-worship she would renounce the brilliant promise of her life," said the senora, bitterly. "If I could only convince her that Vane is as false as he is handsome, she might listen to reason; but when I speak disparagingly of him she flies into a storm of wrath, and then puts her hands over her ears to shut out my words. But I'll conquer her yet or die in the attempt."

"Fight it out between you; but if you do conquer, I shall esteem you a greater tactician than Napoleon himself. In defiance of her uncle's opposition, Savella seems to cling to him even more fondly than before this discovery."

"Because Mr. Fontaine is gentle and kind with her; he expects to subdue her by such means; but if she were left to him she would soon elude us all, and make good her escape with her lover; for she hints at the possibility of a clandestine marriage in one of her letters."

"Ha! I feared as much; and as a last resource I know what I shall do."

"Not make friends with Vane?" she asked, in great wrath. "If you attempt that I will do what I threatened."

"Pooh! you are as stupid as Savella. I know what I am about. You only keep your own counsel, and leave me to take care of our mutual interests. You know that such a course must be my last throw upon the dice, and will not be resorted to unless in the belief that all other means of securing our interests must fail. You will submit to whatever I may think best to be done; for, if you refuse, I will throw the whole thing up and turn evidence against even you."

"You would not dare!" she gasped.

"I would not only dare, but do it, if you should be guilty of the imprudent act you threatened. Go to Savella now; she has already been left too long alone, and here comes Fontaine to hear my report of the amended health of his darling."

In a white rage, Senora Roselli precipitately left the hall to avoid the scrutiny of Fontaine, who rode up and dismounted in front of the door.

With his blandest smile, Somerton met him outside, and gave him the most pleasing accounts of Isola's convalescence.

"This is glad news to me, Mr. Somerton; and to your skill I owe the restoration of my beloved child. I shall not forget this, you may be sure," said Fontaine, with animation. "There is a fine horse in the stable which you are in the habit of riding; hereafter you will consider him as your own. He is the brother of Lucifer, and not inferior to him in spirit. I have noticed that for one of your cloth you can manage a fiery steed as well as the best of us."

"Oh! thank you, Mr. Fontaine, you are too munificent; the trifling service I have performed for your daughter scarcely merits such a reward. As to my knowledge of horses, in my wandering life I have had some practice in that line. I have been among the Arabs of the desert and the wild riders on the steppes of Tartary."

"You have been a missionary, then? I once thought of adopting such a career myself; to bring the knowledge of Christianity to the heathen I hoped might

be accepted as an atonement for the faults of youth; but just as my purpose was assuming a tangible shape, accident threw Isola under my protection, and I, selfishly perhaps, preferred devoting my life to her."

Mr. Somerton did not enlighten him as to whether he had played the part of the missionary among the nomadic tribes of whom he had spoken, for at that moment Giles announced that supper was ready, and the two went in and joined Savella and her aunt at the table.

The face of the young girl was sad and clouded; but when her uncle came in, she looked up to him and smiled faintly. Fontaine inquired how she had spent the day, and endeavoured to draw her into cheerful conversation; and in this he was seconded by Somerton with the tact he so eminently possessed.

By his seeming piety and humility, the *soi-disant* clergyman had gained the entire confidence of his host; for Fontaine found it pleasant to have so intelligent a companion, who was ready to talk or be silent, as suited his moods, and he also believed that Somerton used his influence to hold in subjection the fearful woman whose advent in his house had been so terrible a blow to him.

Himself high-toned and honourable as a knight of chivalry, Fontaine was incapable of suspecting or comprehending the fatal snare that was narrowing around him with every passing hour.

When they went out from supper, Savella said:

"You have had no music for several days, Uncle Claude. Shall I play for you this evening?"

"If you please, my dear; I shall be charmed to hear you sing again. Your proposal to do so proves to me that your spirits are beginning to recover from their late depression. If we do that which is right, Savella, no common sorrow can long affect our happiness."

"Oh, uncle, I am afraid that I shall never do right. I am naturally bad, but, in spite of my—of what you discovered, you know that I am not usually deceitful."

"I believe that your nature is a frank and truthful one, Savella; and in those two qualities lie the basis of much that is excellent in human character."

Savella seemed to be scarcely listening to him. She suddenly said:

"Oh dear, darling uncle Claude, if you would only make me happy in my own way, I should be the most grateful creature breathing."

"Remember my promise, Savella. Give me a pledge to remain unmarried till you are twenty-one, and I will then, if you remain true to your lover, and he to you, give my consent to your union."

"Let me communicate with Philip, then, and see what he says. If he consents, I will agree to this proposal; for anything is better than being constantly watched by such a Cerberus as my aunt. She scolds, and worries me, till I am ready to run away from you all."

"I entreated her to be gentle with you. Savella, do not speak of such a thing as an elopement; for I consider it an indelible disgrace to a woman to make a clandestine marriage."

"Sometimes no other course is left to her."

"In a few cases it may be so, but they are very rare; and a girl who rashly takes her fate in her own hands in such a manner, is very apt to have cause to repent of it in bitterness of spirit."

"Ah well, I shan't have the ghost of a chance to try such an experiment, for Aunt Bianca never leaves me, night or day. She has taken up her lodging in my room, and, I verily believe, she sleeps with one eye open; for I cannot move that she does not ask me if I want anything."

"I regret that you should be subjected to such annoyance, but it is with my approbation that you are thus guarded. I hope such precautions will not long be necessary, my child; but it depends on yourself when they shall cease."

Savella made no reply, but sat down to the instrument and dashed off into a perfect storm of sound. She knew that this was not the style of music her uncle preferred, but it accorded with her own humour at the moment, and after wreaking her irritated feelings on the unoffending ivory, she struck into one of his favourite airs.

Piece after piece was played, and it was ten o'clock when Fontaine arose from his seat, and said:

"You must be tired, Savella. I will tax your good-nature no longer."

She came up to him and again offered him the good-night kiss, which she had withheld since the adventure in the woodland; and he courteously led her to the foot of the staircase, and watched her ascend, with a fulness of tenderness for her he had never felt before. If he could only have believed in Philip as he once did, he would gladly have given to her the happiness for which she pleaded; but he had lost all confidence in him, and he felt the assurance in his own mind, that the passionate love of this inexperienced heart was not reciprocated by its object.

CHAPTER XX.

On Horror's head horrors accumulate!

Shakespeare.

Fontaine went to his library, and in a short time the house was buried in the deepest silence. He watched and waited for his usual visitor, but no indication of his presence came on, and after reading an hour, he retired, hoping that he would have a night of undisturbed rest, for he had ridden many miles that day.

Fatigue soon steeped his senses in a heavy slumber, which lasted till after midnight; but suddenly he was aroused by a chorus of raps, which seemed to come from every part of the room. Fontaine started up, and the voice came to his ear in clearer tones than usual:

"Claude, I am, at last, permitted to become visible to you. Behold me as you last saw me!"

Through the dense darkness of the room a pale light suddenly flashed upon the white wall opposite his bed. Heavy curtains, closed at the foot, but looped back in front, hung around the bedstead; and through this opening, Fontaine had a distinct view of a circle of flickering light, in the centre of which a dim figure was outlined leaning upon the breast of a kneeling woman,—whose face was bowed over him.

With a feeling of death-sickness, he gazed upon the dying form, from whose breast the clothing was torn, and the gaping wound lay exposed to his shrinking sight. The pallor of approaching death was stamped upon his features, and he almost fancied he saw the pale lips move as the terrible words, "Fratricide, behold your work!" met his ear.

Fontaine attempted to get out of bed, that he might test the reality of this fearful vision; but his powers of volition seemed suddenly paralyzed, and, with a faint cry, he sank upon his pillow insensible.

Many hours passed before he recovered from the death-like trance into which he had fallen. So soon as consciousness returned, the whole scene at once flashed upon his memory. He opened his eyes to see if any vestige of it yet remained, for as long as he kept them closed it seemed to him as if the bleeding image he had seen was stamped so indelibly upon the retina that it would remain with him for ever.

Daylight was struggling into the room, and one glance assured him that the pure white wall retained no trace of the phantasm it had shadowed forth on the previous night; but to his deeper horror, the vision seemed to be gliding from it toward himself. It paused when just beyond the reach of his arm, and it seemed even less shadowy than on the previous night.

Fontaine pressed his hands upon his burning eyelids; but when he removed them the image was still there, and he exclaimed with agony:

"Oh! Father of mercies, am I indeed haunted by a phantom? Is it henceforth for ever to be my companion?"

The voice came in reply:

"For ever!" and the ringing tones seemed to die away in solemn echoes.

In the deep anguish of his soul, Fontaine prayed for death; annihilation, anything was better than this awful punishment for a crime which had been so bitterly repented, so woefully expiated by years of suffering, all of which, it seemed, availed nothing in his favour.

Many times did Fontaine unclothe his eyes, hoping by that time the vision had vanished, but it was still there; and as the sunlight penetrated into the room, it seemed more of a reality than before.

Though feeling weak and overwrought, he arose and made his toilet, making efforts to turn his back upon the dread figure; but, to his increasing horror, it pursued him, always seeming to stand just beyond the reach of his arm, and receding as he approached, but never disappearing.

Fontaine had read of such illusions, and, terrible as this one was, but for the singular occurrences that preceded it, he should have concluded that his eyes were deceiving him; but, if that were so, how should he account for the voice that nightly came to speak with him? Claude Fontaine's mind was not even then quite sane, and he came to the fearful conclusion that he was accursed—that an avenging demon was upon his path, which he might never elude—and he muttered, with pale lips:

"The end must soon come now. Reason, which has tottered more than once, must be dethroned, and I—I become that outcast of humanity—a living body bereft of its guiding intelligence. Awful, awful doom! Yet perhaps I merit it; I dare not arraign the justice of heaven, for I have not merited its mercy."

Fontaine made an effort to appear calm at the breakfast-table, but his pallor, and the wild look he cast before him, caused many inquiries as to the state of his health.

He replied that he was quite well, but he must have slept too heavily, which caused his unusual paleness. But every time he looked up from his plate, the sud-

don start he gave betrayed that his nervous system had been severely shaken.

He had no appetite, and after forcing himself to swallow a cup of coffee, he arose, and said that he would walk in the open air, as the atmosphere of the house was oppressive to him.

As he disappeared, Somerton spoke to the senora, in a guarded tone:

"Mr. Fontaine seems much indisposed to-day. I am afraid my skill as a leech will soon be called on in his service. The pupils of his eyes seem unnaturally dilated, and there is every indication of a severe attack of fever."

Savella overheard him, and she impulsively spoke: "If my uncle is ill, I hope he will not accept you as his physician, nor Aunt Blanca as his nurse."

Somerton turned sharply on her, and asked:

"What can you mean? I think you are growing too presumptuous with your new prosperity."

"I know very well what I mean," she undauntedly replied. "It is this: that a prophecy I heard made on the night of my arrival in this house, may chance to meet its fulfilment if left to your tender mercies."

Senora Roselli laughed in a singular manner.

"You foolish child!" she said; "because I foretold the probability that Mr. Fontaine would die some day of apoplexy, you have taken it into your silly head that I intend to do him some injury. Have no fears from me; if he is ill I shall not approach him; Agry would think I had unwarrantably invaded her privileges if I attempted such a thing."

Savella drew a long breath, and said:

"I am glad that you give me such an assurance. Yes—let the old woman wait on him as she has always done."

Somerton fixed his piercing eyes upon her, and spoke in low, concentrated tones:

"Savella, you have dared much in affixing such a stigma upon either your aunt or me; but you are singularly defective in judgment, and therefore I forgive you. But let me warn you of one thing: your prosperity, your future are indissolubly connected with ours; so beware how you throw on us the odium of charges which might ruin us even if they were never proved."

"I charged you with nothing. I do not understand threats, nor do I much care for them. I have done your bidding in winning over my uncle, and with him for my friend I am no longer afraid of you; no, nor of my aunt either, though I freely confess that she makes my life a torment to me."

Somerton regarded her in menacing silence, but she seemed perfectly unmoved by his anger, and with a curling lip he presently said:

"We may both yet make you feel that our power over you has not utterly passed away, even if you have come into possession of fortune. Go to your room, ingrate, and pray for forgiveness for the deadly sin of ingratitude."

"I will go to my room, because it is my pleasure to do so, but not to say my prayers at your hypocritical command," was the defiant reply, and Savella sprang up the stairs, careless of the baleful glance that followed her till her figure was lost to view. Then turning to the senora, Somerton hurriedly said:

"Savella is getting beyond all bounds; but we shall soon have her in our power as much as the others, and she must be made to feel her dependence upon us. Claude Fontaine will not long be in a condition to protect her, or any other person; for if ever incipient insanity was mirrored in a man's eye, it is in his this morning."

"Are you quite sure?" she eagerly asked. "That would be better than the other; two deaths in the house might bring suspicion upon us, in spite of every precaution."

"You will see. I am a good physician if I am a poor priest; but you had better follow Savella. She has already been too long alone, for no one knows what such a marplot may accomplish in the few moments she has been out of sight."

Thus admonished, the senora hastened to join her niece, and Somerton purposely hastened to throw himself in Fontaine's way. He found him walking to and fro upon the lawn, and approaching him, apologetically said:

"Pardon me for intruding upon you, Mr. Fontaine, but I am uneasy about you. In your appearance there is every indication of approaching illness, and I think a few precautions may spare you much suffering."

Fontaine vaguely regarded him. He presently seemed to comprehend what Somerton had said, and turning to him, asked:

"Do I look so ill as to alarm you? Do you think if I refuse medicine that death will speedily release me from the life that has become a wretched burden to me?"

"I cannot say that; your constitution is a very strong one, and you might struggle through without aid, but I would not advise you to attempt it."

"I set no value on life. It is my most earnest desire to escape from it, therefore I refuse to use any means to prolong it, though I thank you for your solicitude on my account. Oh! death—death will be a release; I have no fear of the shining angel, for he would be the most welcome messenger a merciful Creator could send to me."

There was such a fervent passion in his last words that even the malignant creature beside him felt that he was deeply in earnest. He slowly said:

"Yet your lot is blessed beyond that of ordinary mortals."

Fontaine fastened his glittering eyes upon him.

"Have you not read of those fair fruits which on attempting to gather crumble into dust and ashes in the hand? They are a type of my life; my heritage was a goodly one, but its enjoyment was blasted ere the first bloom of life was past. I am but a miserable wreck, tossed upon a sea of doubt, which I might have solved by suicide had not something within me held my sacrilegious hand. Mr. Somerton, you are a man of learning; you have had many experiences; but have you ever before seen a man haunted by a phantom which he could not exorcise?"

"I have read of such illusions, but they are temporary. They generally proceed from some derangement of the nervous system."

Fontaine laughed in so wild and strange a manner that it made even Somerton shiver.

"If it is an illusion, I am doomed to be its victim. There! there it is now! wherever I move, it glides before me, the blood-stained victim of him I slew in a moment of vehement passion. Ah! the secret of my life is spoken! Yet no—'tis not a secret, for that woman knows it. She has come hither to live in my house—to torture me by her accursed presence; yet I dare not drive her away. What I have endured since she came hither no words may express; yet, even that is less terrible than the voice which nightly salutes me in the tones of the long-buried dead! Man! you are a priest, and I am at the confessional. Reveal what I have now told you, and I will double my crime by taking your life. Do you understand?"

He stood before Somerton menacing, pale, his large black eyes dilating, his lips writhing with passion. Somerton shrank before him, but his own eyes never left those of the speaker. After a pause, he gently said:

"Mr. Fontaine, I was right. You are already delirious. Come with me to your chamber; let me summon your family physician."

"No—that is not necessary. I am not ill. I was never stronger in my life than I feel at this moment. The pain is here," touching his brow. "The disease is here," passing his hand over his eyes. "Even when closed I see that awful form, which is branded upon my brain in indelible characters. Can your skill send that into oblivion? If it can, I will submit to your treatment. If you are powerless there, I am lost—lost—lost!"

His voice died away in a faint murmur, and Somerton ventured to take his feverish hand in his own. He softly said:

"You are in a strange state of excitement, sir, but I will do my best to relieve you. I have heard of such hallucinations before; but, as I just now assured you, they were temporary. Scattered through medical works, I have found many such cases recorded. As a classical scholar, you must have read of the familiar demon of Socrates. In later times many distinguished men have cherished the belief that they were haunted by a spiritual presence. Oliver Cromwell, hard and practical as he was, had such a belief. Napoleon also, and several others that I could name."

"Yes—yes, I have read about them all, for such things have always had a strange fascination for me; but theirs was not an accusing spirit who came in a tangible shape and spoke with them in audible tones, as mine does. I have slowly come to the conviction that I am accursed above all men. Thank heaven that no child will come after me to bear the burden of my sin, for it is recorded: 'I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children.'"

"Do I understand you aright, sir? Do you say that this mysterious voice has spoken with you?"

"Yes, for many weeks past. Before you came hither I first heard it. After your arrival for some time I ceased to be haunted by it, but since Isola left me it has again returned."

"This is indeed strange! Does it speak with reference to her?"

"Always: I am warned to put her away from me, but that not even the infernal powers shall make me do. Isola was given to me in the hour of my deepest desolation; she has been the one thing that made life endurable to me, and I will never cast her off; no—not even at the bidding of one from the regions of the dead."

"You are right, sir," said Somerton, with animation.

"It would be a cruel piece of injustice to give up this young girl who is entirely dependent upon you. Neither can I think that the spirit of your lost brother, even if it could communicate with you, would exact such a sacrifice at your hands. Yet it may be that some spiritual influence, some evil demon may have gained power to annoy you thus. Shall I use my priestly skill to exorcise him?"

"Ah! if you could do so! But this is no longer the day for such mummery. Excuse me, Mr. Somerton, but I cannot believe that the repetition of a mere form of words can drive this apparition from me. I trust that my eyes may prove to be only temporarily affected, and I think it will probably be best to accept your advice as to a consultation with Dr. Sinclair. But I shall not send for him to visit me. I will ride over to see him this morning."

"That will be the safest course. I would offer my services, but I am not an oculist, and I am afraid to tamper with anything so precious as the sight. I think your physician will tell you to return home and go to bed, that you may be treated for the fever that evidently inflames your blood."

"If he does, I shall scarcely obey him. In my present state of mind, rest would be intolerable. I must have action, action, action; for I feel that there is little time left for me to act in."

"Are you then apprehensive of a speedy death?"

"A living death," he gloomily replied. "Death to all that is noble and grand in the human soul; annihilation to the godlike principle which the Creator breathed into man with the breath of life, while the physical creature still lives on. Oh! this doom transcends all other forms of punishment; yet I have merited it, and I dare not impugn the eternal justice of heaven."

He turned abruptly away and strode toward the stable. In a few moments Somerton saw him dash off on his powerful black steed, and ride at headlong speed down the valley in the direction of Dr. Sinclair's residence.

(To be continued.)

MAN AND NATURE.

THE form of geographical surface, and very probably the climate of a given country, depend much on the character of the vegetable life belonging to it. Man has, by domestication, greatly changed the habits and properties of the plants he rears; he has, by voluntary selection, immensely modified the forms and qualities of the animated creatures that serve him; and he has, at the same time, completely rooted out many forms of both vegetable and animal being. What is there, in the influence of brute life, that corresponds to this?

We have no reason to believe that in that portion of the American continent which, though peopled by many tribes of quadruped and fowl, remained uninhabited by man, or only thinly occupied by purely savage tribes, any sensible geographical change had occurred within twenty centuries before the epoch of discovery and colonization, while, during the same period, man had changed millions of square miles, in the fairest and most fertile regions of the Old World, into the barrenest deserts.

The ravages committed by man subvert the relations and destroy the balance which nature had established between her organized and her inorganic creations; and she avenges herself upon the intruder by letting loose upon her defaced provinces destructive energies hitherto kept in check by organic forces destined to be his best auxiliaries, but which he has unwisely dispersed and driven from the field of action.

When the forest is gone, the great reservoir of moisture stored up in its vegetable mould is evaporated, and returns only in deluges of rain to wash away the parched dust into which that mould has been converted. The well-wooded and humid hills are turned to ridges of dry rock, which encumbers the low grounds and chokes the watercourses with its debris, and—except in countries favoured with an equable distribution of rain through the seasons, and a moderate and regular inclination of surface—the whole earth, unless rescued by human art from the physical degradation to which it tends, becomes an assemblage of bald mountains, of barren, treeless hills, and of swampy and malarious plains.

There are parts of Asia Minor, of Northern Africa, of Greece, and even of Alpine Europe, where the operation of causes set in action by man has brought the face of the earth to a desolation almost as complete as that of the moon; and though, within that brief space of time which we call "the historical period," they are known to have been covered with luxuriant woods, verdant pastures, and fertile meadows, they are now too far deteriorated to be reclaimable by man, nor can they become again fitted for human use, except through great geological changes, or other mysterious influences or agencies of which

we have no present knowledge, and over which we have no prospective control.

The earth is fast becoming an unfit home for its noblest inhabitant, and another era of equal human crime and human improvidence, and of like duration with that through which traces of that crime and that improvidence extend, would reduce it to such a condition of impoverished productiveness, of shattered surface, of climatic excess, as to threaten the depravation, barbarism, and perhaps even extinction of the species.—*Physical Geography as modified by Human Action.* By George P. Marsh.

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE TOILS.

Hush! who are these who skulk and hide,
Who plot and plan in murderous whispers?

The Venetian Bride.

With the deadly drug in her hand, Theodora approached her bedchamber window. She raised the sash, and taking a seat, leaned her head upon her hand, gazing fervently out into the dark, still night.

Strange thoughts flitted through her agitated brain—strangely confused thoughts, which bewildered and stupefied her.

What should she do—what could she do, to escape the fate that threatened her?

But then, who was to force her into this hateful marriage, if she did not choose that they should do so? Why should she not seek protection in flight?

Could she not go to some far distant place—to London, say, and earn her living by her pictures. Why should she remain any longer with the people who seemed to grudge her her board and lodging? Genevieve had told her that she possessed a future fortune in her art, did she but exert herself.

But, no; when she began to think seriously of this plan, she was fearful that there were dangers and difficulties in the way which she had not thought of at first.

How could a young girl go to London alone and set up a studio? And if she failed, what fate awaited her there in the midst of the wicked city, which swarmed with wretches ever on the look-out for the young, innocent, and unprotected?

No one would help her. No one would save her but Austin.

As she mentioned the loved name, her cheeks flushed to bright crimson, then faded into deathlike pallor.

"Does he love me?" she murmured, softly. "Alas, I may have been mistaken. His attentions, marked as they undoubtedly were, might have meant nothing—or nothing but compassion for a sick and suffering girl."

For some time she wept in silence, then resumed, with a struggle:

"How can he love me?" she said. "He, who has every advantage of wealth, position, personal graces and accomplishments, and extensive intercourse with the best society—he, who would be a suitable match for the richest heiress. No, how can he love me—a poor, little, lame girl, quite penniless, and nearly destitute?"

Passionately now she wept, and through her sobs, in a choked voice, cried:

"Oh, what vain thoughts I have harboured! Heaven forgive me!"

Here her attention was directed to the poison which she held, and had held for some time, tightly clasped between her slender fingers.

"By its aid," she murmured, "I might escape." She rose slowly to her full height, as she uncorked the little phial.

But in the act of raising it to her lips she paused. It was not that her courage failed her, but that she resolved to face her persecutors boldly, and fight out the battle bravely to the end.

She then replaced the phial in her medicine-chest, and unlocking her desk, from its depths took out a portrait.

Upon it she fixed her eyes with a burning gaze, and murmured softly to it, her whole soul's emotion thrilling in the low tones of her voice:

"Yes!" she muttered passionately—"yes! I knew, indeed, that from your own higher and happier life you looked down only in compassion upon this poor sphere of mine. I knew that was all. Yet still it were sweet to be free to dedicate this little life with all it has to you—to be free to think only of you all day, dream only of you all night, live with you in the spirit all my earthly life—looking forward to the time when, in heaven, the soul, casting off its disguise of flesh, shall appear in all its immortal beauty, when

you shall see me and know me for your own eternally—when I should rejoice to say, 'I have been faithful unto death!' This should have been my earthly lot. Thus, in a happy vision, I should have lived with you in spirit, my love—my love! Thus should I have merged my life in a blessed dream of yours, until the night of earth should be passed and the day of heaven at hand! And now! But it must not be—shall not be! I will keep my soul sacred to this holy love and heavenly hope. Oh, Spirit! look on me through those glorious eyes. Give me strength to suffer and be true!"

But while this fair young creature was thus yielding to her soul's enthusiasm, Mrs. Throgmorton was meditating in her own chamber upon the ways and means of bringing about the union upon which her mind was fixed.

"It shall be!" she said to herself—"it shall be! The pale-faced chit has long enough been a burthen to us, and stood betwixt my Rose and her chances of marriage. She shall marry him in spite of herself!"

Conversing with her daughter Rose at an earlier period of the evening, Mrs. Throgmorton had said, deceitfully:

"I feel sorry for her, Rose. Poor creature! She suffers a great deal, but what else can be done for her? Her scheme of painting pictures is most absurd. If Austin were here, I do not believe that he would ever dream of marrying her. And one thing is certain—"

"Which is, mother?"

"That we don't want her here!"

"But are you sure that Austin would not marry her? Theo has the most taking little face I ever saw. There is an expression in her countenance—a look in her eyes when she raises them to one's face that seems to draw the very spirit out of one's bosom. And I have been used to her all my life, and am, besides, a woman, and not a very susceptible one either. There is a deep and exquisite beauty beaming through her pale, transparent face. If I were a young man, I am not so sure I should not fall in love with her myself. So I don't wonder at Austin."

"But her lameness! How can you talk so wildly?"

"But you don't see her lameness when she is still. You only see her delicate, spiritual beauty, and even when she moves there is not the least awkwardness or ugliness in her limp. Her motion is as graceful as the flutter of a wounded bird. It excites only the sweetest sympathy for her."

"You will presently tell me that her lameness is an additional charm. However, Austin is not in the county. And if he were —"

"If he were?"

"You must know that there is a vast difference between his taking a poor lame girl out for a ride and his marrying her."

"I don't know. I am persuaded that Mrs. Denby took him away because she wanted to separate them."

"That's a reason why Theodora should give up all hope in that direction; for if Ida Denby sets her face against anything whatever, no power on earth can bring it to pass."

"No. I never knew a woman with such a calm, passionless, irresistible will."

"There is nothing for Theo but to marry Basil. The most fortunate thing that could happen to her, did she but know it."

"And when is this wedding about to take place?"

"In a week at the most."

"A week?"

"Yes. I have said it."

"But how is it to be managed?"

"Leave it to me," said Mrs. Throgmorton, and for the moment a perfectly fiendish expression passed over her handsome features.

Next day Basil made his appearance, and had an interview with Mrs. Throgmorton.

His face was all aglow with blended joy and timidity.

"I don't know how to thank my dear Dora," said he. "I know I am not worthy of her. She looks so like a princess that should be shielded away from the common rudeness of the world, that I tremble now that I am sure of her."

He was sitting close to the window, and the light fell full upon his gleaming, ingenuous face.

But the lady sat with her back to the light—her face in the deepest shadow.

"Could I see Dora to tell her how happy and grateful her consent has made me?" he asked.

"I think not at present. She is not very well."

Basil hesitated.

A cloud came over his homely face.

"Madam," he said, "please forgive me for what I am going to ask you. But please, also, answer me frankly. On your honour as a woman, have you influenced your niece in my favour? Is it to your interference that I am indebted for Theodora's late consent?"

There was a pleading earnestness in his honest face.

She was evidently troubled.

She blushed and stammered.

At last, however, she recovered her self-possession. "Mr. Wylde, perhaps my reply may wound and offend you," she said.

"No, it will not, madam. It may be what I expect; but I shall not be offended."

"You are sure?"

"Yes; I would rather not owe the possession of Dora to anything but her own heart. Speak, madam."

"I tell you plainly, then, as I told her, that I did not entirely approve of this intended marriage. I thought you rather a wild, unsettled young man, and I thought Theodora rather childish, and that you two would not make a very hopeful couple; but, finally, believing the happiness of you both too deeply concerned, I gave way, even against my own judgment, and have not opposed the wedding. You must forgive me for speaking so plainly."

Basil was completely deceived and overjoyed.

"My dear madam, you make me very happy. But say, has any one influenced Dora in my behalf?"

"No one has spoken to her upon the subject but you and me. If you have any doubts, you can see her to-morrow."

"Oh, dear madam, I am quite satisfied. Indeed, I fear it was very rude in me to ask you that question at all; but you see I have Theo's happiness so much at heart. My greatest satisfaction in this world would be in taking care of her, and doing her good; but if, after all —"

"I understand, Mr. Wylde, and I honour your scruples. I have no doubt that you will make Theodora happy."

And so the interview came to an end, and Basil returned home rejoicing.

Left to herself, the scheming woman stood silently gazing out into the twilight, which gathered thickly upon the darkening landscape.

"How is it to be done?" she said to herself. "How is it to be done? Ah!"

A sudden thought occurred.

A bright flash illuminated her features.

A devilish cunning glittered in her dark eyes.

"I see how it is to be done," she muttered to herself. "I see it all. The drug—the drug!"

The conduct which followed these observations was strange and incomprehensible.

She stole, on tiptoe, to the door of the next room, and listened.

Then, on tiptoe, she crept up-stairs to the doctor's laboratory.

Her hand was on the lock of the door.

It opened suddenly before she could retreat.

She found herself face to face with her husband.

He was a cold, silent man, rarely agitated. He regarded her excited face with astonishment, which did not lessen, when refusing to give any explanation of what was the matter, she turned and ran up-stairs.

At this moment she was frustrated in her plans, but not for long.

That night, when all the house were plunged in sleep, a white figure crept noiselessly down-stairs towards the laboratory door.

With a face as white as death, this figure entered the room, carrying a small lamp, the rays of which it jealously shaded with its thin, transparent hand.

Presently might have been heard a faint chinking among the bottles.

Then, one being selected, the figure crept away again, as noiselessly as before.

"Ha, ha!" said the figure, with a low chuckle. "It can be done now, if the doctor is removed; but how can his absence be contrived?"

And with a dark and frowning face, this night-wanderer crawled up-stairs again, crawled noiselessly upwards, as some reptile might creep, in the pitchy darkness, upon its prey.

CHAPTER XVII.

UNDER THE SPELL.

What dost thou, woman?

What I shall answer—

Wait and see!

Staulle.

Two days after the events just described, the gossip in the neighbourhood had plenty of news to occupy their attention.

Two very extraordinary scraps of intelligence were being buzzed about from mouth to mouth.

One of these was that the doctor had gone to Vienna, summoned thither by a rich patient upon the point of death; and that he had received a telegraphic message in the middle of the night, and had jumped out of bed and set off upon his journey at half-an-hour's notice.

The second piece of news was, however, the most interesting.

Also the most extraordinary.

Theodora was going to be married next day, by special license, to Basil Wyld.

Everybody at receipt of this intelligence was open-mouthed in blank astonishment.

"Did you ever?" asked everybody; and echo answered as is usual upon such occasions, "No I never."

The question for which the gossips had the greatest difficulty in finding a reply was, why there should have been a special license, and why the marriage should not have been performed in the customary manner, at the parish church?

It was decided that Mrs. Throgmorton did it for the purpose of display.

But this opinion was changed when it became generally known that nobody had been invited to the wedding.

The party was to consist of a few members of the families of the two principal actors.

It was to be a private wedding, and the happy pair were to depart, immediately after the ceremony was over, for a quiet little village in Wales, in which their honeymoon was to be passed.

But there had been a rumour prevalent for some days respecting the bride's indisposition.

She was confined to her room.

No one was allowed to intrude upon her. No one but Mrs. Throgmorton had access to her apartment.

The servants whispered among themselves and wondered, but no one could unravel the mystery.

One of the housemaids had played eaves-dropper upon the day preceding the doctor's sudden departure, and had overheard a certain conversation which had very much mystified her.

The scene that had occurred was this:

Mrs. Throgmorton entering the room found Theodora lying upon her couch, her hands pressed to her head.

"What is the matter, my dear? Are you unwell?" she asked, kindly, as she spoke approaching the bedside, and taking the girl's hand in hers.

"No, aunt; I am only a little tired," replied the girl, smiling gratefully at this unwonted tenderness.

"Indeed, I am afraid you are ill, child, or are going to be so. I must ask the doctor to come and see you."

And as she spoke the lady affectionately seated herself by the side of Theodora, laying her hand upon the forehead of her patient.

"You are very feverish," she said.

"No, no, dear aunt," the girl answered; "I have only my usual afternoon's weariness upon me. I shall rise refreshed in a few minutes."

"Your usual afternoon's weariness?" the other repeated. "You do not mean to say that you have these attacks every day? Why did you never mention it? I must prescribe for you, if you will not allow the doctor to do so."

"But, dear aunt—"

"Theodora, you would not willingly vex me?"

"No, aunt."

"Bless you, my dear."

The lady stooped and pressed a Judas kiss to her lips, and glided from the room.

The servant meanwhile hurried down to her companions and informed them, with many smirks and sneers, that the mistress was really growing quite affectionate to poor Theodora.

It certainly was an extraordinary wedding.

The house was full of dressmakers, busy at work upon Theodora's *trousseau*.

The whole neighbourhood was in a state of the greatest excitement.

The only one apparently unmoved by the events stirring around her, however, was the bride.

As Basil stood in the dining-room upon the day of the strange wedding, awaiting the arrival of the bride, he was pale and thoughtful, and there was an anxious expression upon his face which amounted almost to pain.

"Was he happy?" he asked himself.

Was not there a lingering doubt in his mind that she could never love him?

That there was some mysterious influence forcing her to this step, the source of which he could not discern?

He looked at himself uneasily in the glass.

He nervously regarded the appearance of his red, bristly hair, his sunburnt, freckled skin, small, light-grey eyes, a clumsy nose, a great mouth, an awkward form.

How could she love him?

To do so were impossible.

She was so symmetrical, so delicate, so graceful.

No, she could not love him, and yet—

Yet if she only could and did, how grateful, how devoted he would be!

One thing; if, for near as the consummation of his hopes appeared to be, there still seemed to be an "if."

—he were so happy, so blessed as to gain her, though he could not be the handsomest, nor the wisest, nor the wealthiest husband in the world, he would be the

most loving and disinterested, yes, that would he—that, at least, was in his power.

The devotion of love should be hers.

Long had he remained plunged in this reverie, pacing to and fro in the dimly-lighted dining room—an apartment which was sad and gloomy at noon on the brightest summer's day.

Suddenly, however, his sister Nelly burst in upon him to awaken him from his dream and inform him that the hour had come.

Did she awaken him, though?

It seemed to him that all that was passing around him was strangely unreal and phantom-like.

The poor bewildered fellow appeared to be half-dazed by the great happiness which had so unexpectedly fallen to his lot.

"Nelly," he said, pressing his hand to his head—"Nelly, could you contrive that I see Theodora for a few moments before the ceremony—only for a moment?"

"What are you talking about?" she made answer. "It's impossible; everything is ready."

"Never mind, then," stammered Basil; "but somehow my heart misgives me, and I should like to have a few words with herself."

But she heeded him not, and taking his arm led him up-stairs to the drawing-room, where the company was assembled.

He gazed around him in the same bewildered state, scarcely recognizing any among the faces which met his in the subdued light which the closely drawn curtains admitted upon the strange scene.

In a moment more he was in the presence of his bride, and a delicate gloved hand was resting upon his sleeve as he approached the clergyman.

Very quietly that little hand lay there. It did not shrink nor tremble.

He wonderingly stole a timid glance at its owner's face. It was deadly pale, he fancied, and the eyes neither met nor avoided his, but, neither downcast nor fearful, looked straight forward with a wistful, dreamy look, which was very strange.

Her look and manner too, were incomprehensible.

She might have been walking in her sleep.

She was as one in a trance.

Once or twice Basil tried to speak, but he could utter no sound. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he trembled violently.

All this time the ceremony was proceeding, the clergyman was reading the solemn exhortation which opens the marriage ritual, but the words fell upon the bridegroom's ear with a dull, unmeaning sound.

Presently he stammered forth the responses the clergyman put into his mouth, and then he started at the sound of the voice of his bride which was as strange as her manner.

A moment afterwards he found himself giddy in a little whirl of congratulations.

And he was married.

She was his until death parted them.

He glanced at her now as she sat by his side. The same calm, colourless face—the same quiet eye and composed manner.

No change in her occurred before the carriage arrived which was to take them away upon their journey.

None as they travelled along the road as fast as four horses could take them.

And now they were in the railway carriage, screaming through green meadows, past tiny villages, nestling away among the trees, solitary farmhouses, small straggling towns, and broad pasture lands, spreading away on all sides as far as the eye could see.

And at last they had reached their journey's end, a picturesque little place upon the sea-coast, and there, in the parlour of the principal inn, a great commotion arose, the gabble of a score of tongues, the hurrying to and fro of many feet, Basil with wild hair and eyes, and the village doctor summoned in haste, quite beside himself with the strangeness of the malady for which he was called upon to prescribe a cure.

Here, in the quaint, old-fashioned parlour, with its black panels and smoke-dried oil-paintings, its diamond-paned windows, heavy red curtains, and partially-carpeted floor, poor Theodora seemingly awoke from her trance.

Awoke with a cry of terror and consternation.

A wild, heart-broken cry, fearful in its intensity of anguish.

"Where am I—where am I?" she screamed, in frenzied tones. "I am betrayed—I am lost! Austin, Austin, save me!"

The doctor, summoned by Basil, who said that his wife was ill—ill to death—mad—dying—found that his terror had not greatly exaggerated the case.

He came, to find Theodora delirious. He administered the remedies which seemed to be required, and sat by the bedside of his patient to watch the effect.

For hours he remained there, repeating the dose, and waiting, with the greatest anxiety, the result.

Towards evening, the dangerous symptoms that he had combated through the day began to yield.

In going out of the sick chamber, he stumbled, and nearly fell over the prostrate form of Basil, who had thrown himself down on the floor outside the door.

The young man started up and seized the doctor's hand.

Holding him prisoner there, he implored a true report of Theodora's condition, and, if possible, permission for himself to go in and sit by her.

"She is more composed, my poor fellow; and if you can control your feelings sufficiently to keep quiet, you may go in there and sit with her."

Basil wrung the doctor's hand in gratitude.

"Is she out of danger?" he murmured.

"We must hope for the best!" the doctor replied.

Days and weeks, however, passed away, while Theodora hovered between life and death.

Basil was her devoted nurse.

The gentlest woman could not have been more gentle.

His solicitous love seemed to endow him with the tact, skill, and tenderness that only experience usually gives.

A month had thus passed, when one day the landlady announced a visitor—Nelly.

Basil received her coldly, for he could not help suspecting that she had had some share in the treachery which had been practised upon the poor, unprotected girl.

The plausible tale which she told him, however, soon established friendly relations between them, and ere long the sister obtained the upper hand over him that she had had before his marriage.

One day two letters were forwarded from the doctor's, where, as the family had been for some time on the continent, they had lain neglected.

"Do you know who they come from?" Nelly asked.

Basil looked at the writing, and started and coloured.

"From Austin Denby."

"Did you know," said Nelly, "that he was Theodora's lover, and that was the reason Mrs. Denby took him abroad with her so suddenly?"

"I thought so," choked Basil.

"And now, then, he writes to her!"

"Well?"

"You have a right to open and read his letters—to possess yourself of the contents, and learn the relations in which those two stood towards one another when he went away; that—that would show you how to act."

"Helen Wyld," he cried, "you are yourself this moment stammering for shame at what you want me to do."

"At any rate," said she, with a frown, "you had better suppress these letters, the perusal of which must make her unhappy. I speak for her good."

"Helen," he said, "you drive me mad. Now I tell you what I shall do. I shall keep these letters carefully until Theodora is able to read them. Then, mind you, I shall not give them to her with my own hands as if I wished to know what was in them. No; I shall leave them on her table, so that she may find them when she is alone, and read them without interruption. I shall never name the letters to her; but if afterwards she chooses to give me her confidence, she may do so. Heaven knows I am afraid the poor, unhappy girl, has been hardly and deceitfully enough dealt with, but I have had no hand in her injuries—for myself, I was deceived. But it is too late now to help it! All that is left for me to do is—to act right."

Ah, poor Basil! What is left for any of us, in any strait, to do but simply—right!

One morning when Theodora was well enough to come down-stairs, Basil came in, bringing her a bunch of the first white lilies of the season, and fixing her alone, he left the two letters on the table, beside the vase of lilies, where she would not fail to see the superscription for herself.

And then he withdrew, and waited and hoped.

Meanwhile she sat there, thinking how delicate and disinterested was the affection of this poor, uncultivated lover—how impossible that he should have been a cognizant party to that base conspiracy, by which her freedom had been sacrificed.

She was conjecturing, as she often did, now, what could have caused that fatal apathy of will which had left her on the day of her marriage, an easy victim to that bitter treachery.

But through all this the lilies were unnoticed. She turned her eyes, at last, towards them, and her glance fell upon the letters.

She impulsively caught them up, growing pale at the sight of the familiar handwriting.

She looked at each in turn, and opened the one of latest date:

"Hotel de Louvre, Paris.

"MY OWN DEAREST ONE:

"Though I wrote half-a-dozen letters from Havre, and a dozen from this city, yet I cannot refrain from writing again to-day.

"Indeed, when the pen is not in my hand, I am still in thought writing to you.

"Every new impression that I receive here, refers itself directly to you, even as memory and hope speak constantly of you.

"My heart's dearest Theodora! My soul's best earthly good. May I call you so at last? May I assume that you will believe at last that my heart is wholly yours, and that you have not disdained its offering?

"It is needless to inform you again that my whole life, since our first meeting, must have told you how long and devotedly I have loved you.

"But it is necessary to explain why, while all my conduct spoke one language to you, my lips did not specially confirm it.

"A promise given long ago to my mother, that I would not enter into any engagement until after my majority, has hitherto sealed my lips.

"How I longed for the time to arrive which would set me free.

"It has come.

"To-day I am twenty-one, and I lay my freedom at my lady's feet—my own Theodora.

"The sea separates us, but I could not refrain this first moment of my power of doing so, to write you this letter.

"Very soon in person I will follow it —"

No more.

She could read no more.

Slowly, slowly, word by word, the miserable facts of happiness unpeepable as unhoped for, so nearly secured, so irrevocably lost, had gathered around her consciousness, oppressing, crushing her to the earth.

Then her strength utterly failed her.

Her head sank upon her bosom. Her arms dropped to her sides.

The letter fell from her relaxed fingers.

She fainted.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A STRANGE SCENE AT DEAD OF NIGHT.

"Tis night; within a curtained room,
Filled to faintness with perfume,
A lady lies at point of doom."

Anon.

We must, for a while, leave poor Theodora in the midst of her misery, for other scenes and characters demand our immediate attention.

Come then to the house of a country doctor, the successor of the Dr. Lesworth, the parish doctor of Tyneford, to whom the extraordinary events occurred which are narrated in the 8th chapter of this story.

It was a wild and stormy night, and the wind howled and roared, and the thunder rolled and crashed above and around the doctor's house, as he sat reading in his room, when the clock struck twelve.

His wife and child had some time ago retired to rest, for they both were weak and ailing. The doctor himself looked somewhat pale and careworn, for he was very poor and very hard worked, and he would have done well too, perhaps, had he also sought his couch, and closed his weary, aching eyes in sleep.

But Hugh Wynne thought that he had no time to waste in such a way. He had been working hard all day with his tongue and his legs, tramping long miles to see his patients. Now he must work hard with his head, coaching himself for cases yet to come.

He had married a portionless young girl, this struggling doctor, and had set up in practice in London. His wife's waning health, however, had obliged him to abandon it and come down into the country. His wife showed hopeful signs of improvement, however, since he had taken up his residence at Tyneford, and he did not regret his old home.

He watched over her, his heart's treasure, with all a husband's love and all a physician's care; and whatever his own irregularities of food, rest, and exercise might be, he took good care that his wife did not share them.

Upon this night of storm, and as the clock struck one, a ring at the door-bell startled the doctor from his studies.

The doctor arose in some surprise, for his night summonses were very rare, and walking through his little surgery, opened the door. A tall man, carefully muffled up, stood silently on the door-step.

"Well!" said the doctor.

The man made no reply, but fumbled in his pockets, while the doctor stood staring at him, not a little annoyed by his slowness. When, however, he was going to ask indignantly whether he had got a tongue in his head, the man drew from his pocket a letter, which he handed to Dr. Wynne.

The doctor opened it. He had neither address, date,

nor signature, and it was written in a hand that was evidently disguised. It was as follows:

"I have sent a close carriage for you. Come immediately if you would save a fellow-creature from death, and worse than death. You shall be well paid. The messenger is deaf and dumb; but he will drive you safely."

The doctor hesitated. It was a very strange business. Should he obey the summons? He was very poor. He was to be paid well. His poverty made him consent, although it was not without some heart's misgivings and forebodings of evil to come.

Motioning to the mute to take a seat, he stole on tip-toes up-stairs to his wife's chamber, and stole down again and said that he was ready, and he and his guide quitted the house together.

It was as dark and as wet as the river Styx, and the storm was still raging furiously. The carriage was drawn up close to the house, and the horses were dripping under the pouring rain.

The doctor carefully closed the house door, and entered the carriage. Then the dumb coachman mounted the box and started the horses, and thus through lightning and thunder and pouring rain, Hugh Wynne went, all unconscious, to meet his fate. Through driving wind and lashing rain, and blinding lightning and deafening thunder, the horses rapidly forced their passage along the black roads, and the doctor sat back in the carriage, meditating on the strange summons which had thus called him forth at dead of night.

It was a long and wearisome journey, and terminated, at last, in what seemed to the doctor to be a thick forest. They at length halted, and the mute opened the carriage-door.

The doctor alighted amid the pouring rain, and followed his silent conductor into a narrow footpath, which the thickly interlaced branches overhead rendered almost as black as pitch.

Walking for some distance through the raging storm, they at last arrived at a stone wall, in which there was a small gate, almost hidden by shrubs. Opening this with a key, the mute led him into a large garden, in the centre of which a flash of lightning revealed a lofty mansion peeping through the surrounding trees.

At the side door of this house the conductor knocked softly with his knuckles. In a few moments the door was opened, a fair hand was stretched forth, and the fingers closed upon the doctor's wrist.

Then he was led in death-like silence and pitchy darkness into the house, while his late conductor, upon whom the door was closed, was left out in the storm.

"Why am I brought here?" inquired the doctor at last; where am I?

"Hush!" said a woman's voice. "Speak low. You need not be alarmed."

"But why this mystery?"

"Are you a physician, and do you ask such questions as these? Neither your practise of medicine nor your knowledge of the world can be very extensive."

The doctor was silenced for awhile. His mysterious guide drew him along up broad stairs, covered with carpet of a pile so thick that their footsteps were perfectly soundless. At length, on the second landing, she opened a door and they entered a room. It was a dimly-lighted, sumptuous chamber, whose gloomy splendour surprised and impressed him.

From the furniture of the room the doctor's eyes wandered to his fair guide. She was a tall and majestic woman, about forty years of age. She was richly attired. She was very handsome, but yet there was something repelling in her beauty—something absolutely fiendish in the glitter of her dark green eyes. The doctor shuddered as he looked upon her.

"Is my patient here?" he asked, at last.

"She is there," she replied; and pointed to a bed which the room contained. All was still there, as still as the bed of death when the soul of the dead has departed.

"And now," said the lady, "I have something to say to you concerning your patient."

She spoke of that which would have called all the blood in a woman's heart in fiery blushes to her cheeks, to have sent it back next instant—to have left those cheeks white for evermore. Yet her cheeks changed not.

She spoke of that which would have caused another woman's voice to tremble and falter, but hers never varied in its tone.

"I have heard, sir," she said, "that doctors are bound by their professional oaths never to reveal the secrets of women, under all circumstances?"

"Except in criminal cases."

"It is a secret of a woman that I am forced to confide to you to-night. I say forced, because, had I been able to manage the case alone, I should not have called upon you or any other human being. As it is, you alone know the secret. The man who brought

you here is totally ignorant of your errand. Not a soul in this house, save yourself, knows of your presence. Not a soul suspects the necessity of your presence. The secret then will be confided to you alone, and to you only, because your help may be necessary to save a life."

The doctor thought, as he looked at the speaker, that her cruel lips would not have faltered in pronouncing the doom, nor those handsome eyes in beholding the death of any one whose life might stand in her way.

"Your patient is the young person in yonder bed. I do not say young lady, because, in fact, she has forfeited her position as such. I do not tell you her name, because she has lost all claim to bear it longer. Nor will I reveal her family, because she has brought deep dishonour upon them all."

"Madam, it is enough for me to know that the young lady requires my professional services. I shall ask no unnecessary questions, but do the best I can for her. Is she asleep?"

"Yes: I was obliged to administer a powerful opiate. She is still under its influence."

A movement at that moment from the bed attracted their attention.

A plaintive voice murmured, as though half asleep: "Oh, must I die—must I die here alone? Oh, Arthur, why have you deserted me?"

The lady and the doctor both approached the bed. The lady drew aside the curtains, and stooped over the sufferer.

"Gladdys!" she said, in a low tone.

But the patient made no answer.

The doctor started at the name and changed colour. The lady had to speak to him twice before he heard her. Then he turned, with a pale face and distracted eyes, towards her. Then the lady walked away and left him by the bedside.

A face of chiselled marble and of perfect beauty. Coal-black hair, eyebrows and eyelashes; and the stillness of death over all.

The doctor glanced over his shoulder. The lady was busy at a table at the other end of the room.

The doctor looked at his patient again with a long and scrutinizing earnestness. Then took up her hand and felt her pulse.

His touch, or some sudden feeling, convulsed her. She shuddered through all her frame.

A spasm passed over her white face, her features twitched, her large dark eyes flew open, glared wildly around, and then settled in terror upon the doctor's agitated face.

Then, with a glance of shrinking fear directed to the elder lady, she drew the doctor towards her, and whispered into his ear:

"Why are you here?"

"I have been sent for," he replied.

"Will you save me?"

"If possible."

"You will protect me from—from her?"

"You need not be frightened, young lady. I am here to aid you."

She looked up in his face with an eager, inquiring, searching gaze.

"You look so good and wise, and brave; you will not turn against me, will you? I have no friends in the world."

"Indeed I will not," said the doctor.

"And do not think evil of me. I am married. On my soul I am. I have been married nearly a year. See, here is my wedding-ring."

The doctor looked at her hand.

"I wore it on a ribbon round my neck until to-night; but I was determined to put it on my finger. 'See there it is,' she said, holding up a little white hand to the doctor's view.

"I do not doubt you, my dear. Do not agitate yourself unnecessarily," said the doctor, gently taking her hand.

"Oh, thank you—thank you, for believing in me, but here I want you to look at my ring—draw it off my finger and read the inscription inside."

The doctor complied with her request, and read:

"Arthur to Gladdys."

"That is it. Now put it on my finger again. I wanted you to know it, so that if I should die in the coming trial —"

"Hush, my child. You will not die, and you must not think so," said the doctor, as he replaced the golden circlet upon her finger.

Before she could speak again a spasm of pain seized her, and held her so long in its terrible grasp that it seemed that her strength must succumb.

"Madam, I must have the assistance of a woman here," said the doctor, firmly.

"I am a woman, and I am here ready to render all the assistance you may require," replied the lady, coldly.

"You, madam?"

"I!"

The doctor said no more at the time, for she

patient required all his attention. The lady, meanwhile, busied herself with a nurse's preparations about the room.

An hour passed on.

An hour of mortal agony to the patient, and of intense anxiety to the doctor. Then he came to the lady and whispered:

"It is impossible to save the lives of both mother and child. One or the other must be sacrificed."

"Then save the mother—sacrifice the child!" said the lady, as the gleam of a horrible joy shot from her dark green eyes.

The doctor went back to his patient.

Another hour passed, and again the doctor was at the lady's side.

"The mother is saved."

"And the child?" she inquired.

"Is also saved."

The lady's face changed. The hideous joy that had lighted it up died out, leaving it pale, and cold, and hard, and full of blank disappointment.

The doctor watched her closely for a moment, then returned to his patient.

She caught his hand, and gazed wildly into his face.

"Oh, doctor, save my child?"

"From what?"

"From her—from a cruel fate at her hands."

"I will; but," he asked, in a whisper, "who is this lady whom you fear so much?"

The girl looked at him in terror, and glanced up at the lady standing some distance from the bed.

"She is—" she whispered in a low and trembling voice, "she is—"

(To be continued.)

ROYAL ROADS IN THE LAST CENTURY.—"George II. and Queen Caroline were one night travelling on the road from Kew to the palace of St. James's, by torchlight. It was in so bad a condition, that they were some hours before they even got to the road at Hammersmith, which leads to Fulham. Endeavouring to reach town by this new route, they only fell from bad to worse, and they had not proceeded far, when crack went the axle, down broke a wheel, over went the coach, and the united majesty of England lay in the mud, so undignifiedly with regard to the Queen, so blasphemously as respected her consort, that a Jacobite might have taken double delight at witnessing the calamity which had fallen on the 'Electress and Electress of Hanover,' and beholding how they bore it! Even the road between St. James's and Kensington Palace was kept in such ill repair that, in winter, or after heavy rains at any time of the year, the royal coachman could not pilot his august freight through the ruts and over the ridges in less time than from one to two hours and a half, according to the weather and its effects on the little statute labour applied to this road."

It is a gratifying proof of her Majesty's desire to foster and support the various excellent institutions established by the late Prince Consort for raising the social condition of the working classes, that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was requested by her Majesty to go to Windsor on Thursday week to distribute the rewards annually given by the Royal Association, which is now, at her Majesty's desire, called "Prince Consort's Windsor Association." Right nobly did the Prince discharge the duties so scrupulously performed by his late father. At the dinner which took place in the evening, Sir Charles Phipps, who presided, in proposing the Queen's health, referred to her Majesty's domestic virtues as being matters of such daily observation in Windsor, that he need not dwell upon them, and he would have been well content to leave the toast to speak for itself, but that he was charged with a message from her Majesty. It was to assure the meeting of her continued and undiminished interest in the association on whose behalf they were assembled. Her Majesty had particularly desired him not to fail to do this. Since the establishment of this excellent association the committee has annually distributed 200l. in various rewards to the deserving labouring classes.

HOW DOES IT IN VIRGINIA?—Coming events cast their shadows before, and already we see predictions are fast being fulfilled. Grant is, no doubt, a daring man, but he is not a general to cope with Lee or even with other generals of the Confederacy. He has fought many battles and won not one in this campaign. He has lost thousands of men in the vain attempt to reach Richmond and his chance of taking that city has become less ever since he fought the first battle of the present campaign, and we must expect to hear that like McClellan he has been compelled to retire. His soldiers whose time has expired will not re-engage, and he would seem to have lost the confidence of his whole army. In a vain effort to sustain him, it is said that Mr. Lincoln made his pilgrimage across the Potomac; but, like all such attempts, the visit was a

failure. Heat, drought, fever, and ague will during this month do more than shot and shell for the destruction of Grant's army; and the only sane course left to him is to escape from the swamps which surround him, and a general like Lee, who will assuredly fall on him at the critical moment. If we look all around, taking Richmond as the centre, we must see that the Confederates are successfully operating against the several Federal forces. The time seems near when the war must close. Men cannot be got for the Northerners, and "bankrupt" may now be written over the Washington Treasury.

HOPE RESTORED.

LIKE a harp whose strings were broken,

Like a long-forgotten song,

Like a magic word unspoken

Since years have sped along;

So my heart has slumbered ever

Since its fondest hope seemed dead;

Oh, it seemed that joy for ever

And the soul of life had fled!

But the harp's again resounding,

And the song so long unsung,

Its wild melody is sounding

With passion's strain among;

For a form of light, appearing,

Sings the long-forgotten strain

With a pathos so endearing,

That my heart is glad again.

Tell me not, though light once vanished

From my soul and left it dark,

That the shade can ne'er be banished

By another shining spark;

Even things and thoughts are dearer,

When they're seen through memory's light,

And the morn of joy is clearer

Since the passing of the night.

J. B. S.

ADVENTURE WITH A BEAR.

BY COL. WALTER R. DUNLAP.

UNDER the guidance of Neafie we struck off to the northwest, keeping close in by the base of the mountains, and at the distance of ten or twelve miles we reached a village called Meeloo, where we obtained a good dinner of rice and milk.

The potail was a stupid sort of a fellow, but he knew enough to know that there were bears in the neighbourhood; and for two rupees he offered to conduct us to the spot where they were to be found; but we did not require his services. The jungles upon the hill sides we could see for ourselves, and the man of whom we had obtained our rice had pointed out to us the direction of the caves; so all we had to do was to mount our horses and pursue the plainest paths. We were not without guides, however; for a score of the villagers, who knew far more about the mountain passes than did the potail, were anxious to accompany us. We had no objection to paying two rupees, or two dozen rupees, for services which might be for our sole benefit; but when we remembered that every bear we captured was a gain of incalculable amount to the village, the idea of paying the head-man thereof for the privilege of thus helping him did not exactly suit us.

"The bears do great damage," said a native, who walked by the side of Darley's horse. "They steal all our best fruit, and break down our crops; and sometimes they kill our people. I think they are worse than tigers."

The man was not far wrong in his assertion. The bear is not so terrible an animal as the tiger, but bears are more numerous than tigers in the districts where they abound, and do far more mischief. For every domestic animal destroyed by the tiger the bear destroys growing crops of double value. And as far as the destruction of human life is concerned, it is not at all improbable that the bear is responsible equally with the tiger. Neafie informed me, while we were conversing upon the subject, that while he was stationed at Ramnugur, he was cognisant of the fact that in one of the small districts of the Nerbudda over a hundred human beings were killed in one year by bears.

In an open glade, where there was plenty of good grass, we left our horses under Dan and Fitzben, and proceeded to pick our way among the rocks on foot. The natives who had come with us had not erred in their calculations, for we had not gone twenty rods from the horses before we struck the track of a bear. That part of the mountain to which we had been guided abounded in caves and fissures, and in less than two hours we had marked no less than six places where we were sure bears were quartered. Our guides assured us that they had never seen one of these bears away from the mountain in the day-time, but that they paid their visits to the gardens and grain-fields by night; so we concluded that we would pursue the

same course as before, and intercept the marauders as they came home from their night's work. Accordingly we returned to the village, where we found more rice for supper, with the addition of boiled chicken; and where we also obtained some fresh, clean straw for beds.

In the morning, at an hour which Ben Gilroy declared to be outrageously early, we were aroused by Darley, who thought we had better be on the move. It would be daylight in two hours and a half, and as we had some distance to go, we should not have more than time enough. As our arms had been duly prepared before we retired, we had nothing to do but to be up and off, with some rice-cakes and cold chicken in our haversacks. Harry and I chose to watch together, as before, with Dan to keep us company; Neafie and Ben, with Malek, took another path; while Darley, and Abner and Abdalla took a third.

In a narrow ghaat, near the foot of the mountain, was a large cave which seemed to extend some distance into the rock, as when we had looked in on the day before we had been unable to discover the end of it, though the light which poured through the broad opening had revealed to us room enough within to accommodate a hundred men. About the mouth of this cavern the bear-tracks were plain and fresh, and this was the point which had been allotted to Harry and me. We had no difficulty in determining which way the bear had gone out, for in one direction the ghaat led to a solid face of rock, beyond which there was no possible way of egress without wings. In the opposite direction the ghaat extended some two hundred and fifty yards before it opened into the broader way, and at this latter point, where the pass widened, we took our station. There were no bushes to shield us, but we found sufficient shelter behind the loose rocks.

We had been some time on the way, and the stars had already begun to grow dim when we had gained our position; but we felt confident that our game had not yet passed in from his nocturnal ramble, so we waited very patiently. Slowly the darkness melted away before the opening dawn, and as objects began to grow distinct we heard the banging of rifles in the direction of Neafie's quarters.

"We don't get the first shot this time," said Harry, regretfully.

"Never mind," I replied. "We'll have a good chance to fire when our turn comes."

"If their firing don't frighten our game away."

"I think there is no danger of that."

I might have said that I knew there was no danger, for just as the expression of doubt fell from Harry's lips, I heard a rattling, scratching step upon the rocks below us; and ere long a lusty old bear appeared, making all possible haste toward his den, the reports of the rifles having evidently alarmed him. He was coming toward us, with his breast exposed, and as soon as I could bring the line of my sights to bear upon the centre of the horse-shoe, I let drive a three-ounce lump of lead from my Antwerp. Harry was not more than a quarter of a second behind me, aiming at the same spot. I knew that I had hit the mark, and I was sure that Harry had done the same; but the bear did not stop. He leaped into the air, roaring with pain, and then dashed on toward his den, passing within half-a-dozen yards of where we stood. I had given my heavy rifle to Dan and taken my double-barrel, and springing out into the path I gave the fellow a ball in the back, at which he leaped on faster than before. Harry fired a moment later, but I did not notice the direction of his shot, nor did I stop to listen to what he was saying. The bear must not gain his den if I could prevent it, and without a thought of my companions I dashed on into the ghaat, running at the top of my speed, and was just in season to give the bear the contents of my second barrel as he turned into the mouth of the cave. I hurried up, and when I looked into the cavernous opening I saw the beast writhing in the agonies of death. There could be no mistake but that the fellow was done for, and being determined to finish him before Harry came up, I dropped my empty rifle and drew my stout hunting-knife, and rushed in. It was a dismal place; but there was light enough where the bear had fallen; and, stooping over him, I lifted his foreleg and plunged the shikar-blade to his heart.

"That finishes you, old fellow!" I muttered, as I drew forth the blade and wiped it upon the hair of the shoulder.

The words had just dropped from my lips when the cave suddenly became dark, and the sound of a footstep fell upon my ears.

"All right!" I cried, supposing that Harry was the owner of the opaque body that had come in between me and the daylight; but upon looking up I discovered my mistake, and a woeful mistake it was. Instead of meeting Harry Rusk, I met a full-grown bear.

The brute, as soon as he saw me, raised himself upon his hind legs, and peered at me in a manner

that would have been excessively ludicrous had not the attending circumstances been of so grave a character.

He cocked his head first upon one side and then upon the other; then he snuffed, and then he took a step towards me and growled. This growl, I assure you, had nothing comical about it. It was as ugly a sound as a man would care to hear, and it gave promise of dangerous work.

I was most assuredly in a peculiar situation. I could not leave the cavern while the bear stood in my way, and I had no hope that he would step aside to let me pass.

My only weapons were my knife and one pistol—my sword I had left behind. If I must come to close quarters with the brute, my knife was the weapon upon which I could place the most dependence; so I held it firmly in my hand, ready for the worst. I could see the dirty white horse-shoe on the breast, and I knew that my blade, plunged through the centre of that, would reach the heart.

Of course I was anxious, but I was not at all frightened. My nerves were as steady as could be, and I do not think the pulsations of my heart were much stronger than usual. I had been in worse situations—far worse.

Of course I had some curiosity to know how this fellow had gained his position in my rear; I wondered where he had come from; I wondered how he had passed Harry—if he had passed him at all.

But I had no time for much research in that direction. The bear had satisfied himself that I was an intruder and an enemy, and with another growl, more vindictive than the first, he advanced towards me with his huge fore-arms lifted. A single blow of that terrible paw might kill me.

In an instant, as though borne by an electric current, all that I had ever known or heard about bears came flashing through my mind; and the many hair-breadth escapes that had been treasured up in my memory were vividly daguerreotypied before me. Two pictures took precedence, and remained fixed after the others had dissolved—one of them was Harry Rusk's dosing the grizzly with sulphuric acid, and the other was of our old host in New Hampshire, who, when caught by a black bear in a cave, dashed into the brute's eyes a lot of snuff.

I had neither sulphuric acid nor snuff, but I had something that might take the place of the latter. Could not I blind the bear by the discharge of my pistol? It was worth trying, at all events.

These thoughts had been almost instantaneous, and by the time the bear had come within striking distance my pistol was in my hand and cocked, and seizing the opportunity when his attention was turned to spreading his arms for a hug, I jammed the muzzle up between his eyes and fired.

The antics which he commenced to cut I cannot describe. Suffice it to say that for the time he was effectually blinded, and before he could make further use of his sight I gave him my knife several times, once in the horse-shoe, once in the side of the neck, with a slashing cut, and once behind the shoulder.

This last cut floored him, and as he settled back upon his haunches, with his shoulders drooping, I gave him another thrust in the breast.

The beast had just settled upon his side when the entrance to the cave was again darkened; but this time, as I looked up, I saw Harry and my boy Dan.

"What in the world is this, colonel?"

"Aye, what in the world is this?" I cried. "You left me in a pretty scrape. I thought you were following me."

"How should you think so? Didn't you hear me call to you?"

"No."

"But you heard me fire."

"When?"

"A moment after you gave our first bear the second shot."

"Certainly," said I; "and I supposed you had fired at the same bear, and were ready to join me in the chase."

"Not at all," explained Harry. "Just as you fired your second shot, two more bears came rushing up the path, and it was at one of them I fired. By the time my smoke had lifted you were away after your game, and both these other bears had passed us. Dan and I immediately gave chase, and presently the one at which I had fired, and had wounded, turned upon us, the other one keeping on after you. What could we do? Of course we had to stop and kill this belligerent, which Dan did most handsomely with your Antwerp. After that we hurried up, and here we are."

"And just in season," I said, "to see me safely out of a very snug corner—a corner, my dear Hal, about as snug as the one into which the grizzly once drove you."

We had both had stirring work; but surely we had no reason to complain. We had captured three noble bears, which was just one more than the rest of our party brought in. Neafie and Ben had taken one, and Darley and Ben had taken another.

When we returned to the village the natives pronounced us great Shikarees; and it was with extreme regret that they saw us depart. But Neafie's business called him back to Palamow, and we had no desire to remain without him.

THE MURDERER'S TRACK.

At a pretty little village, with one long, straggling street of houses running through its centre, which might have deformed its beauty had it not been for the many green lanes that spread away from it, with their little white cottages and shady trees, in the summer of 1830, the cheerful sounds of labour were rising from a blacksmith's anvil, accompanied by the words of a fine old song from the lips of the smith himself. He was a young man, strong, handsome, and upright, with an arm on which the muscles stood out like a pile of cordage. His hair was black and curling, his cheeks of a clear, healthy red, and his eyes were honest, earnest, yet laughing eyes, of a deep brown, large and lustrous.

The shop stood a little back, with a great elm shading the roof, and just behind it stood a cottage, not white like the others, but a dark brown one, painted thus that it might not show the grime and smoke of the smithy. The great elm stood between them, dividing its shade, as the sun shone east or west; and looking through its green branches, or across its broad trunk, the young man could look as often as he pleased at the clear, shining windows, where a comely little woman was sitting, with her baby in her arms, or sewing busily—too busily, sometimes, to return his loving glance.

Everything about the cottage was in keeping. The floors and doorsteps were white as marble; the curtains and the bed-coverings glistened with the polishing of Mattie Henderson's own irons; and the baby's dresses and cradle drapery were so pure and snowy, that the father, coming in from the shop with his blue shirt and trousers, hardly dared touch the little Lily that met him, on her knees, at the door. And Lily they named her, although the child of a blacksmith.

On this summer day, Mark Henderson had run in two or three times to see his pet. Never had she seemed so sweet, and never had the young mother looked more lovely than in her pretty summer dress of pink muslin and white apron, and, what Mattie never lacked, a fresh, shining linen collar and cuffs. As to Mattie's housework, it seemed done by fairies. No one—not even her husband—ever saw it performed. Mark was in his shop at four in the morning, regularly.

At six, he was called in to breakfast, and the house was then in holiday garb; everything washed and arranged, and the dinner in preparation. Her bread was always white and nice, her butter like lumps of gold, and her coffee as clear as amber. Men know how to appreciate these comforts, and slatternly women cannot tell how surely the lack of attention to them loosens the links that bind husbands to their homes.

It was on this July morning, that he went back to the shop, after breakfast, throwing back a kiss to baby Lily, and resumed his toilsome but healthful labour, singing cheerily as the sparks flew from the anvil.

A clear, hearty voice at the door bade him good morning, and he turned to welcome the presence of Allan Mansfield, the Glenwood carrier, just returned from his daily journey to the neighbouring town. Allan Mansfield had been for years in the habit of carrying packages of work of various kinds from Glenwood to the town, and fetching back articles that could not be procured in the village. He possessed the confidence of all, and the villagers were often indebted to his taste for the selection of goods suitable for their use. He was also entrusted with the collection of moneys, and frequently had large sums of gold and silver about his person. He travelled in a light waggon, with a small but spirited nag, known all over the neighbourhood as Swiftfoot. The animal was mostly white, with large liver-coloured spots on his sides and about his ears—a horse easily recognized by those who had once seen him.

Swiftfoot needed a shoe, and Allan sat down on a large block, while Mark performed his work deftly and cheerfully, as he always did, and listened to the various items of news which the carrier had brought.

"How long has Tom Woodford been out of jail, Mark?" said Allan, suddenly, in one of the pauses of Mark's hammering.

"About a fortnight—why?"

"Because I saw him and that good-for-nothing Jem Brady talking together down in the hollow, and I thought no good was afoot when I saw two

such rogues come together. Is Jem steady now, Mark?"

"I am afraid not. He goes to the tavern; and I have seen him carried by, of moonlight nights, when he could not walk a step. He is past praying for, I fear. The temperance folks took him up for awhile; but they could do nothing with him."

"But Tom Woodford keeps sober, they tell me, and Brady does his evil business for him, when about half-drunk, while Tom pays his tavern bills."

The shoe was placed upon the horse, and the blacksmith came to the door to cool his burning face, while Allan harnessed his nag into the waggon.

"When do you start again, Allan?"

"To-night. I have money that must be deposited in the Middletown Bank to-morrow at nine o'clock, according to the agreement I made with the owner, and I never broke my word yet, although the day is so hot that I would gladly stay and rest myself and Swiftfoot one night, at least."

"Money! I am a contented man, as you know, Allan; but if I had twenty pounds to pay Jem Brady's brother what I owe him, I should be perfectly happy."

"And you have none?"

"Yes, I have fifteen of it; but I dislike to meet him until I can raise the whole sum, for he is very aggravating when we speak of it, and is continually sending me letters. I don't mind telling you about it, Allan—it is the last payment for my little cottage behind the tree there. I bought it of Brady, and saving and prudent as both Mattie and I have always been, not allowing ourselves even a carpet, we have not paid for it yet."

"No," said a voice beside him, startling him and Allan both, for they had heard no footsteps. "No, not paid yet; but you had better pay me than abuse my family. James Brady would like to hear you accuse him of drunkenness, as you have this morning! I am thinking you would get a good horse-whipping for your pains."

Mark's face flushed to a deeper crimson than that which the heat had given him.

"It is an old proverb, Roger Brady, that listeners hear no good of themselves. I am sorry, however, that you heard it, if it hurts your feelings: yet I spoke but the truth, as you and the whole village know."

Mark's manner was firm and manly, yet not disrespectful to the man, although he felt contempt for him in listening so meanly to what they were saying.

The carrier looked uneasy, too, for he remembered that the listener must have heard his conversation about the money he was to take with him in his night ride through the woods that skirted Glenwood. He entertained but a poor opinion of the Bradys as a family, and was unwilling that any of them should know that he was bound for Middletown Bank.

As Roger Brady walked away, Allan said to Mark:

"I should hate to be mixed up with that set at all. I will lend you the money to settle the note. Five pounds, I think you said, would make it all right, and you may pay me at your convenience. Besides, the old wheels will soon need new tires, and then Swiftfoot will always be wanting new shoes. I have not got so much about me; but if you will step up to my house this evening, my wife will give it to you. I am going home now, but shall not come round this way again."

Thankful for the kindly offer, Mark said he would certainly go for it.

Somehow, a shadow had fallen upon Mark's cheerful face that day. Mattie observed it at noon. He had no appetite, even for the fresh strawberries and sweet cream which she had thought would please him so much. It was just the same at supper, and she began to think he was really ill.

"Not ill, Mattie," he said, gravely, "but a little dull. I will take a little walk, and perhaps I shall come back better."

He went to Allan Mansfield's house, received the money from his wife, and called at Roger Brady's.

Brady received him sullenly; but treated him better when he asked for the note and paid the balance. When Mark came out, it was quite dark, but he was sure that two men were skulking about Roger's house, who looked like James Brady and the jail-bird, Tom Woodford.

"Scoundrel!" he heard Brady say: "I'll teach him to report that I am carried home drunk every night. He shall pay for his impudence, as sure as he lives."

Mark would have laughed if any one had told him that these words, uttered by a contemptible fellow like Jim Brady, could affect his spirits; but they actually did. He returned home, feeling quite depressed, to the grief and amazement of Mattie, who insisted he was ill, and wanted to send for the doctor.

"No, Mattie, he could do me no good. I shall feel better when this cloud has passed away."

The next morning was ill-calculated to drive away clouds. Before half-past five, all Glenwood was ringing with the news of a terrible event. Allan Mans-

field, the loved and respected—the cheery, honest and trusted—was found dead in the woods adjoining Glenwood. He was discovered by a labourer who usually took the short cut through the woods, to go to his place of daily employment.

The horse and waggon had been drawn aside from the main road, and poor Allan was lying near it; old Swiftfoot standing close to his dead master and, uttering cries so mournful that one could but think he was nearly human in his grief.

Alas! this was not the hardest of this sad tale. Mark Henderson's hammer was found near the murdered man, and without doubt it was the instrument which brought death to poor Allan Mansfield! That peaceful cottage which was so bright with happiness the morning before was now darkened by a shadow that to all human probability could never be lifted from it.

Mark was arrested. Roger Brady came forward as a witness, to tell of the words he had heard him say to the carrier about money, and to say also that Mark had had money enough, later in the evening, to take up the note he held. Allan's wife deposed that after her husband had gone away, at night, Mark had come to her for money. Allan must have forgotten to say to her that he was going to lend it to him.

Mattie Henderson was strong in her faith that Mark was no murderer of Allan Mansfield. He loved him like a brother, she said. She knew Mark was innocent. He was low-spirited the day before, but who is not so, at times? It might be a presentiment of his friend's death. There are well authenticated instances of such presentiments heralding the death of friends.

Of course, her convictions did not avail anything; but there was difficulty with the jury. None of them could pronounce him guilty, and they dared not bring in a verdict of acquittal.

A new jury was empanelled, of men upon whom Mark's kindly, cheery ways had not made such deep impression, simply because they had not known him so well. They brought him in guilty! but recommended him strongly to mercy.

Mattie Henderson, the gentle little wife, seemed to have suddenly grown into a strong woman of powerful intellect; and, on hearing the sentence, she stood up, facing the judge, and said, firmly, and without a tear:

"You are murdering my husband. God will make his innocence known some day, and it will be known through me. If I walk around the whole earth I will track the true murderer, and God will help me in my search for him. Already I am on his track!"

She was removed by the order of the judge; but as she went out she threw a single glance at the witnesses.

One of them fainted, and was carried out. She saw the white face, and knew whose it was.

There were those in Glenwood and the neighbouring towns who could not believe in Mark Henderson's guilt.

All the evidence against him was purely circumstantial. Even his hammer might have been stolen and used by some person, or Allan himself might have borrowed the instrument, and used it as a defence when he was attacked by the murderer or murderers who finally despatched him. And, in their conviction of his innocence, they drew up petition after petition, which were strongly enforced by powerful signatures, and Mark's sentence was finally commuted to imprisonment for life.

Poor Mattie Henderson could not endure to stay in the cottage where she had been so happy. She quitted it almost immediately, and took a single room in a house upon the extreme outskirts of Glenwood. Here she lived, until all the money she had was exhausted in simply furnishing necessaries for herself and her child.

Poor and unfriended, Mattie was at last obliged to seek support in going out to service; and chanced led her to accept a place that offered itself through the newspaper. It was not a desirable situation—an old tavern, on a lonely road, twelve miles from Glenwood—but it would bring bread to her child—poor little Lily—and she went to it without a murmur.

Not even a mother's eye could have detected any resemblance to sweet Mattie Henderson, in that pale, emaciated, old-looking woman that occupied a menial station at the old tavern. She was white as marble, and her beautiful hair was tucked closely beneath a cap suitable for a very aged person; while the eyes, dim and faded with weeping, were hidden beneath large spectacles. Deep lines were hollowed in her face—the lines which grief and misery had furrowed there. Fate was doing its worst for the lonely dejected woman.

It was a dark, stormy night, and Mattie Henderson had taken the place of the landlord's assistant, who was ill. She sat behind the bar, screened from sight, her only duty being to fill the glasses and pass them to the landlord.

As the storm decreased, the occupants left the house, and the large, dark, gloomy tavern was left vacant for some time.

The door opened suddenly, and a man wearing a slouching hat that hid his face came in and called for a glass of brandy-and-water. It was handed him, and he sat down beside the fire without removing his hat. Mattie quietly retained her seat behind the bar, utterly screened from observation.

Again the door opened, admitting another man. Him, too, the landlord supplied with drink, and then went to his supper, leaving Mattie in her unseen seat.

In a moment she heard:

"Curse you, Tom Woodford! do you know I heard you were dead? Are you? Because if you are, my boy, I would like to have you vacate the premises. It is unpleasant, very, to have dead people about one."

A vigorous punch at the man's ribs gave evidence that he was no ghost. The welcome given was more profound than cordial; but Mattie knew nothing of this. She only knew that the first comer was addressed as Jem Brady, and that filled her whole thought.

Jem Brady had disappeared almost immediately after the trial, and no one knew his whereabouts. But here he was; was talking in a low tone to Woodford; and Mattie bent all her energies to that conversation.

"How strange we should meet here," said Woodford. "Have you been here before?"

"Yes, often."

"Then you have probably appropriated what I came after."

"Do you mean the box we buried?"

"Yes; that carrier's."

"It did us no good, that night's work."

"Hush! the walls have ears."

"Fahaw! there is nobody listening. That old woman behind there has gone to sleep behind her spectacles; and, besides, Allan Mansfield's death is an old story and cannot be revived."

"Be silent, I say. I have not done anything about the box, because I could not get up the courage. Laugh as you will, I care not. I could not go to that place alone."

"Well done; I am here in season, then. We will go together to-morrow; the ground will have thawed sufficiently, so we can dig it up easily, and I shall expect your assistance."

Much more was said—enough to convince Mattie that they were the murderers of the poor carrier. She heard them appoint to meet in the morning at the place of the murder—heard them speak of her husband with jeers and laughter, as they became more and more tipsy, and saw them go away to their sleeping-room.

How she passed the night she never knew. Her brain was on fire, yet she arranged her plan well. They went off in the morning, furnished with the landlord's pickaxe and spade, on some pretence or other, and she saw them take the road toward Glenwood.

The next moment saw her flying over the ground to the house of the nearest magistrate, and in half an hour more they were on the road—magistrate, constables, and Mattie Henderson with them. So sudden was the officers' descent upon the men, who were digging in a deep hole in the woods, that escape was impossible.

Mattie was surely on their track! They were brought to trial in a few days, and the result was the conviction of James Brady. Woodford attempted to turn evidence, but without avail. He was immediately arrested upon another count, and was marched off to await his trial on it.

Into the dark and dismal prison-house Mattie Henderson went from the court-room. As she entered Mark's cell, and saw him lying upon the hard couch, she uttered a cry. He was so pale that she thought him dead. He took her in his arms and recalled her fleeting senses with his caresses.

She opened her eyes with a smile of ineffable satisfaction, as she said:

"Love, I come to release you! Come! this place stifles me. Let us go."

In her ecstasy she forgot that his prison doors could only fly open at the presence of the law; not by loving hands like hers. But one soon came, armed with authority, and Mark Henderson and his wife walked out of that dreary cell, to see it no more.

Once more the little cottage gleamed anew in the sunlight. Once more Mattie and Lily sat together daily at the open window and looked past the old elm, to watch the husband and father at work, while a shower of sparks flew round his face, now again grown brown.

And Mattie, too, grows young again. The misery she has endured has left an inexpressible dignity and sweetness upon a face once only gentle and tender.

THE Duke of Sutherland has offered by telegraph the use of his yacht to Garibaldi for a few days longer, an offer which was accepted. Among the presents sent to the General have been a sedan chair, horses, and a beautiful masonic apron, embroidered richly by the Neapolitan ladies in gold.

THE BARBER'S GHOST.

A GENTLEMAN, travelling some years since in the Highlands, called at a tavern and requested entertainment for the night. The landlord informed him that it was out of his power to accommodate him, as his house was already full. He persisted in stopping, as he, as well as his horse, were almost exhausted with travelling. After much solicitation, the landlord consented to his stopping, provided he would sleep in a certain room that had not been occupied for a long time, in consequence of a belief that it was haunted by the ghost of a barber, who was reported to have been murdered in that room some years before.

"Very well," says the traveller; "I'm not afraid of ghosts."

After having refreshed himself, he inquired of the landlord how and in what manner the room in which he was to lodge was haunted. The landlord replied, that shortly after they retired to rest, an unknown voice was heard, in a trembling and protracted accent, saying:

"Do you w-a-n-t to be sh-a-ved?"

"Well," replied the man, "if he comes he may shave me."

He then requested to be shown to the apartment, in going to which he was conducted through a large room where were seated a great number of persons at a gaming-table. Feeling a curiosity which almost every one possesses after having heard ghost stories, he carefully searched every corner of his room, but could discover nothing but the usual furniture of the apartment. He then laid down, but did not close his eyes immediately, and in a few minutes he imagined he heard a voice saying:

"Do you w-a-n-t to be sh-a-ved?"

He arose from his bed and searched every part of the room, but could discover nothing. He again went to bed, but no sooner had he begun to compose himself to sleep than the question was again repeated. He again arose and went to the window, the sound appearing to proceed from that quarter, and stood awhile silent. After a few moments of anxious suspense, he again heard the sound distinctly, and, convinced that it was from without, he opened the window, when the question was repeated full in his ear, which startled him not a little. Upon a minute examination, however, he observed that the limb of a large oak tree, which stood under his window, projected so near the house that every breath of wind, to a lively imagination, made a noise resembling the interrogation:

"Do you w-a-n-t to be sh-a-ved?"

Having satisfied himself that his ghost was nothing more or less than the limb of a tree coming in contact with the house, he again went to bed and attempted to get asleep; but he was now interrupted by the peals of laughter and an occasional volley of oaths and curses from the room where the gamblers were assembled. Thinking that he could turn the late discovery to his own advantage, he took a sheet from the bed and wrapped it round him, and taking the wash-basin in his hand, and throwing a towel over his arm, proceeded to the room of the gamblers, and suddenly opening the door, walked in, exclaiming, in a tremulous voice:

"Do you w-a-n-t to be sh-a-ved?"

Terrified at the sudden appearance of the ghost, the gamblers were thrown into the greatest confusion in attempting to escape it, some jumping through the windows, and others tumbling head over heels down stairs. Our ghost, taking advantage of a clear room, deliberately swept a large amount of money from the table into the basin, and retired unseen to his own room.

The next morning he found the house in the utmost confusion. He was immediately asked if he rested well, to which he replied in the affirmative.

"Well, no wonder," said the landlord, "for the ghost, instead of going to his own room, made a mistake and came to ours, frightened us out of the room, and took away every shilling of our money."

The guest, without being the least suspected, quietly ate his own breakfast and departed, many pounds richer by the adventure.

VERY MARRIED PEOPLE.—It is usually considered a noteworthy circumstance for a man or woman to have been married three times; but of old this number would have been thought very little of. St. Jerome mentions a widow that married her twenty-second husband, who, in his turn, had been married to

R. F.

twenty-two wives—surely an experienced couple. A woman named Elizabeth Maai, who died at Florence, 1768, had been married to seven husbands, all of whom she outlived. When on her death-bed she recalled the good and bad points of each of her husbands, and having impartially weighed them in the balance, she singled out her fifth spouse as the favourite, and desired her remains might be interred near his. The death of a soldier is recorded in 1784, who had five wives; and his widow, aged ninety, wept over the grave of her fourth husband. There is an account of a gentleman who married four wives, and lived to be 115 years old. When he died he left twenty-three "children" alive and well, some of said children being from three to four score. A gentleman died at Bordeaux, 1772, who had been married sixteen times. In July, 1768, a couple were living in Essex, who had been married ninety-one years, the husband being 107 and the wife 103 years of age. At the church of St. Clement Danes, in 1772, a woman of eighty-five was married to her sixth husband.

THE PERILS OF MONT BLANC.

We had ascended Mont Blanc to a height where most travellers are willing and anxious to turn back to the world below; but I was young and ambitious, and foolishly eager to reach that awfully sublime elevation which so few have ever attained, and in attempting which so many have lost their lives.

"Well, master," said the principal guide, to whom I had previously made known my desire, "what say you now?"

"Forward," cried I, with romantic enthusiasm, "to all that man may dare!"

"Have you laid your life in the balance with your wish?" he asked.

"I have considered everything," I replied.

"Then forward it is, for victory or death?"

He then proceeded to hold a consultation with the other guides, and I to take leave of my friends.

Five mountaineers, including the chief guide, decided to accompany me; and securing ourselves to each other by strong ropes, so that a slip or mis-step of one might not prove fatal to him, we set out, each carrying his knapsack of provisions and negus strapped to his back, and in his hand a long baton, or balancing pole, with a hook at one end and a steel point at the other, to assist his footing along dizzy ledges and over yawning chasms, whose awful depths could not be penetrated by human eye.

We were already in a region of peril. Around and above us towered mountains of ice and snow, whose slippery and dazzling summits we must gain.

Every step of our progress required labour and care, and some of our exploits, as I remember them, savoured more of romance than reality.

It was no unusual thing for us to pull ourselves up by our hands from one crag of ice to another, and lower ourselves over some abyss in the same manner—or crawl along some narrow, slippery ledge on our hands and knees, with a sheer descent on either side of us of a thousand feet.

At length we came to a perpendicular wall of ice, some twenty-five or thirty feet in height, over which we must pass direct, or abandon our purpose. We examined it on all sides, but found nothing better than that which directly faced us. How could we surmount the difficulty?

"If we go forward, we must climb this precipice of ice—there is no alternative," at length said the chief guide, turning to me.

"Can it be done?" I inquired.

"That is a question best answered by trying," he replied. "It is difficult and dangerous, but I think it possible."

He then held a short consultation with his companions, and proceeded to the work. He cut places for his hands and feet, and, climbing up by means of these, cut others still higher, his comrades steadying and supporting him as long as they could reach. He then came down, and had one of the poles fastened to his dress, so that they could keep him from losing his balance.

In this manner he slowly worked his way up, up, till the pole became too short, when he came down and rested while another was being made fast to it. Once more he returned to the work, and soon after he accomplished the bold feat, and stood upon the slippery summit.

The rest of us now disengaged ourselves from the rope, by which, as I have mentioned, we were all connected together, and two others ascended in the same manner as the first, one of them taking the rope up with him.

They now told me it was best for me to go up while there were some below and some above to assist me; and to prevent any accident happening through my inexperience, the rope was lowered and fastened

around my body, and as fast as I ascended the slack was taken in by those above.

When a little more than half-way from the base to the top, one of my feet suddenly slipped, and my body partly swung round.

I grasped firmly with my hands; and the tightening of the rope, with the assistance of the pole pressing in between my shoulders, kept me from swinging clear, and consequently from dashing my bones on the rough ice below—for the pole could not have supported my weight, and those above would have been compelled to let go the rope to save themselves from being dragged over the precipice.

The event gave my system a fearful shock, and in an instant I was covered with perspiration, cold as it was.

I finally got to the top in safety, but I felt so weak and trembling, that for some minutes I sat down on the ice to recover my composure. The others, meantime, made the ascent without accident.

We now set forward again, and for some time met with only minor obstacles, which were readily overcome.

Towards sunset we came in sight of two sharp-pointed rocks, lifting their bare heads in solemn grandeur above the surrounding snow and ice. These were called the Grand and Petit Mulets, and occupied a position a little more than half way up the mountain.

"There is the spot," said Gougjon, the principal guide, pointing to the larger of these two rocks, "where, if heaven favours us, we shall pass the coming night."

As we drew near this rock, I was led to think heaven would not favour us in reaching that dangerous point, for we were suddenly stopped by a wide, black chasm, that made me giddy to look into. This ran along the base of the rock, and completely cut off our approach—nor could we discover any means of getting over it. We could not descend into it and come out alive, and nowhere could we perceive the usual bridge of ice or snow by which we had crossed other similar gulfs.

"The last time I was here," said Gougjon, "there was a narrow wall of ice sloping upward across this chasm, on which I cut steps and advanced, at a great risk of life; but now even that is gone, melted away perhaps, and so, for all that I can see, our upward journey terminates here."

I was disappointed, I confess, for I had set my heart standing upon the very pinnacle of Mont Blanc, and feeling that nothing in this world had ever gone up higher.

"As constant changes are going on," remarked the chief guide, perhaps by this time next year this gulf will be bridged over."

"Ay, perhaps!" I answered, moodily.

As it was now too late in the day to retrace our steps before dark, the next important thing was to find some sheltered spot where we could pass the cold night. We went back some distance, to a crevice which ran around under a huge rock that was in turn overlaid with snow and ice. This was perhaps as comfortable as we could find, for here the wind could not reach us, and the overhanging rock would shelter us from the storm, in case one should come up suddenly, which was not an unusual thing in that locality. For myself, I did not like the idea of spending the night there, for I fancied there was danger of being buried under an avalanche; but, for that matter, there was danger of some kind in every other spot, and perhaps, after all, we should be as safe there as anywhere.

Wrapping myself up as warmly as I could, I passed the first half of the night in walking up and down along a narrow ledge, occasionally exchanging a word with some of the guides, but most of the time brooding in sullen silence over my disappointment. At last, feeling very much fatigued, I went away some distance from the others and sat down; but finding, after a few minutes, that I was becoming drowsy, and likely to fall suddenly asleep, which I did not think was prudent, I arose, with the intention of returning to the guides and keeping myself awake with conversation.

But scarcely had I taken one step forward when I stopped, and felt my hair rise with horror. I heard a strange sound, more like the distant purring of some animal than anything else I can liken it to, and at the same moment, there was a slight vibration or quiver of the ground under me. I cannot tell why, for I had never experienced anything of the kind before; but at once, as if by instinct, I seemed to know it was a descending avalanche, and descending, too, from far above, probably to overwhelm and bury me for ever.

Quickly the distant sounds changed, and deepened in volume, and soon became a hissing roar, fairly shaking the ground beneath me; and then my mind was whirled away from self to the deeply beloved ones at home.

Suddenly, there was a strange rush and oppression of air—a cloud of darkness seemed to settle over me. The hissing roar ended with a terrible crash, and a

silence succeeded, so deep and deadly that it appeared more awful than the noise of a thousand thunders.

But the appalling crisis was over, and I was still alive. I thanked my God for it, and shouted to my companions in peril. No answer! I shouted again. No response! I started to go to them, and three paces brought me against a wall of ice and snow! I recoiled in horror, and comprehended that they might be no longer among the living. I turned and ran the other way, trembling with fear. Six paces brought me against another wall of ice and snow! It was over me—around me—on every side of me! I was buried alive! I shrieked at the dreadful conviction—my brain reeled, and I fell.

It would be useless for me to attempt to paint the horrors of that night, after recovering my consciousness.

When morning once more dawned, to my great surprise—and, I scarcely need add, rapturous joy—I beheld the light stream into my little chamber through an aperture about the size of my body, and only a few feet above my head. I readily climbed to it, crawled through, and once more stood in the living world.

A tremendous avalanche had fallen, but I had only been caught by a light portion of the extreme left, and been saved by the overhanging rock, which fortunately had not been displaced in the downward rush of this mountain of ice and snow. Not so the poor guides. They were further to the right, and were probably crushed to death at once. At least they were gone, and no mortal ever beheld them more.

How I found my way down that awful mountain, alone and unaided, I hardly know. Even now I can scarcely realize that I actually went through so many dangers and escaped with life. On three occasions, in sliding down the hills of ice, I was sent to the very verge of an awful gulf, and saved as it were by a miracle; and three times, in lowering myself down the slippery precipices, I lost my hold, and fell a distance that would have killed most men. And yet not a bone was broken. I was much bruised, however; and once I was so stunned that I knew nothing for an hour. But God, in his mercy, saw proper to give me back to the world, and save me from the awful fate of my companions in peril.

E. BENNETT.

It is hard times for the army in India, and difficult to live, not because bullets fly about, but because the land is threatened with a famine. The prices of nearly every necessary of life are terribly high. Almost every article of provision now costs twice as much as it did a few years ago. Indian pay seems high, but it may be laid down as a general rule that the rupee will buy no more in India than a shilling will buy at home. For some wretched bit of badly-fed mutton the Khansamah will charge the price of a dish of turtle-soup. Articles of ladies' dress fetch about five times what they would at home.

16,000 emigrants landed in New York in one day, and nearly at that average every day of the week recently. It is pretty clear that the Irish and Germans keep up the fighting at their expense of flesh and blood, for out of these emigrants a large percentage of them are taken off to the slaughter-houses at the temptation of 190¢ a head, greenbacks, which the poor fellows do not know is about equivalent to 39¢ cash. It is said that the Irish conscript generally purchases 50¢ worth of greenback luxuries at once, and that often he shakes off his brogues for patent leathers and a white choker and dress-coat—to be worn out in a day or two. The fellow has, at least, gentlemanly instincts.

BABBAGE AND WELLINGTON.—One morning the Duke of Wellington called in Dorset Street with the late Countess of Wilton, to whom he wished me to show the Difference Engine. Its home was at that period in my drawing-room. We sat round it whilst I explained its mode of action, and made it calculate some small table of numbers. When I had concluded my explanation, Lady Wilton, addressing me, said, "Now, Mr. Babbage, can you tell me what was your greatest difficulty in contriving this machine?" I had never previously asked myself that question; but I knew the nature of it well. It arose not from the difficulty of contriving mechanism to execute each individual movement, for I had contrived very many different modes of executing each; but it really arose from the almost innumerable combinations amongst all these contrivances—a number so vast, that no human mind could examine them all. It instantly occurred to me that a similar difficulty must present itself to a general commanding a vast army, when about to engage in a conflict with another army of equal or of greater amount. I therefore thought that it must have been felt by the Duke of Wellington, and I determined to make a kind of psychological experiment upon him. Carefully abstaining from any military term, I commenced my explanation to Lady Wilton. I soon perceived by his countenance that the duke was already in imagination again in Spain.

I then went on boldly with the explanation of my own mechanical difficulty; and when I had concluded, the duke turned to Lady Wilton, and said, "I know that difficulty well."—*Babbage's Passages from the Life of a Philosopher.*

It is said that the Yankees had an eye on the proceedings of the Deerhound, intending to be unpleasant to her when she got to sea. If so, she has escaped their vigilance, for we have information that she was in the Moray Firth on Wednesday, and was about to prosecute her voyage, without fear of hindrance, whithersoever it pleased her.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jewit," "The Prelate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER CL

Oh, how this tyrant doubt destroys my breast!
My thoughts, like birds who, frightened from their nests,
Around the place where all was hushed before,
Flutter and hardly nestle any more. *Othway.*

ALTHOUGH Mrs. Brooks had accepted the asylum offered by Athalie, and undertaken the task assigned her, of acting both as spy and guard upon the Countess of Moretown, she was not reconciled to it. True, she no longer felt the bitter pangs of hunger and cold—no longer begged for precarious bread: still her mind was ill at ease; she felt dissatisfied with herself; the past haunted her like a dream; the mask was partially torn from the hypocritical features of the being whom she had once regarded as her benefactress. The intimate alliance between Dr. Briard and the governess—his knowledge in medicine, and perfect acquaintance with the circumstances attending the death of Madame Duvernay, gave her cause for profound reflection: a terrible suspicion that she had been made the dupe of another's crime haunted her.

"Who profited," she repeatedly asked herself, "by the murder—if murder has really been committed?" The reply was still the same: "Athalie—only Athalie!"

"It will be clear before I die!" she frequently murmured to herself; "I feel it will!"

And she was right: the discovery, like an event cradled upon the wing of Time, was sure to arrive at last.

When the charlatan informed her of the intended visit of the earl and the Frenchwoman to the abbey, she resolved to keep an observant eye upon her: accident might afford some clue to confirm or dissipate the doubts which rose like shadows continually before her.

On one occasion, on entering the library, she had found Dr. Briard so deeply engaged in the examination of a packet of letters and papers spread before him on the table, that, before he became aware of her presence, she had time to notice that they were chiefly in the handwriting of the governess. No sooner had she made the discovery than she felt a sudden desire to possess herself of them.

"Always studying!" she said, after retreating to such a distance from the table as to disarm his suspicions.

The old man looked up, and, before replying to her, carefully gathered up the papers, which he placed in a small cabinet, strongly clasped with silver bands, near him, and turned the key.

"Yes—yes!" he muttered; "as long as I keep my mind in exercise, the body is sure to remain in health! What brings you here?" he added.

The woman placed several volumes which she had brought from the apartment of the countess upon the table.

"More books!" continued the speaker; "well, they are her only amusement, and it would be cruel to deny them to her."

"She does little else than read and pray!" observed the nurse.

"Pray!" repeated the doctor, with a cynical smile; "pray! I should have thought that the years she had passed in loneliness and captivity would long ere this have convinced her of the folly of trusting to Providence, to heaven, and such childish dreams!"

"Are they dreams?" demanded Mrs. Brooks, fixing her eyes upon him, and at the same time with difficulty repressing a shudder.

The man of science shrugged his shoulders with an air of affected contempt.

"Mademoiselle Athalie does not think so!" she added.

"Bah!" he exclaimed; "Athalie thinks as I do—and has done so from her childhood; only, woman-like, she observes the *convenance du monde*."

"Now you are not speaking the truth!" replied his visitor, with a levity which she was very far from feeling; "Athalie and I were children together—read from the same book at the village church in Normandy—went regularly to confession—and—"

"All to please her aunt, upon whom she was dependent!" interrupted the doctor; "and she rewarded her compliance with her superstitious caprices by leaving her her fortune! But there—take your books," he added, "and return shortly after dinner, and make my coffee."

Mrs. Brooks smilingly nodded assent, and quitted the room with the volumes she had come in search of; but no sooner was the door closed between them than her countenance underwent an entire change, and an expression of deep thoughtfulness overshadowed it. She staggered rather than walked to her room, and locked herself in.

"What have I heard?" she demanded of herself. "Even from girlhood the fortune of Madame Duvernay was an object of speculation to her niece, whose religion was a mask to win her favour. Heaven grant that her affection for her relative and the feelings she professed for me may not have been the same. And he—this man who is so dangerously skilled in plants and medicine!" she continued, after a pause; "he appears to have been her confidant, her adviser—perhaps her agent!" she added with a shudder; "horrible as it is, the conviction daily becomes stronger in my mind, I have been made the scape-goat of another's crime—the dupe of her pretended benevolence."

From the date of the above conversation, Mrs. Brooks became a changed woman: her energies were bent to obtain some proof that Athalie had been privy to the death of Madame Duvernay: armed with it, she would become her mistress; without it, she must continue her slave.

The patience of Lady Moretown under her unmerited sufferings—her resignation and piety—gradually won the sympathy and respect of her new attendant, who quickly perceived that she was mad merely because her tyrant found it convenient to prove her so. Suffering had taught the nurse mercy, and she resolved, as far as her own safety would permit, to show every indulgence and kindness to her charge. Had not the fearful threat which the governess kept, like the sword of Damocles, suspended over her head, been ever present to her mind, she would at once have assisted her to escape from her prison to her friends; but that was a step she dared not take.

She awaited the arrival of the earl and her employer with a mingled sensation of hope and fear.

So anxious was the Frenchwoman to put the infamous design she had conceived against her rival—as she insolently termed the unhappy wife of her dupe—into execution, that the very evening of her arrival she sent a message to Dr. Briard, to attend her in her dressing-room.

Mrs. Brooks was present when she gave the order to the old footman, James.

"Tell him," said the female fiend, "that in an hour I shall expect him here. Hark!" she added, as a bell rang, "the earl has left the dressing-room. Let coffee be served immediately."

The domestic left the room with his message.

"You, Brooks," continued the speaker, "return to your mad patient, and do not mention our arrival. By the bye, does she ever speak of me?"

"I have never once heard her pronounce your name," was the reply.

Athalie felt annoyed: the profound contempt which seemed to ignore her existence was galling to her pride. She would have been delighted to hear that the being she had so cruelly wronged daily or hourly cursed her: it would have been a proof that the iron had entered her very soul.

"She has been in one of her calm moods, I suppose?" observed the Frenchwoman, with an air of affected indifference; "it has lasted a considerable time. She will be roused soon!"

The nurse shuddered at the sinister smile which accompanied her words.

"You have seen nothing," she continued, "to lead you to suspect that anyone has obtained access to her since you have been here?"

"Nothing!"

"And the servants are faithful?"

"As far as I can judge—I seldom mix with them."

"You are wrong," replied the governess, tartly; "if your reserve proceed from pride, it is misplaced—if from indifference to our interests, from a worse fault—ingratitude. You must mix with them—enter into all their gossip—catch at every word—act as a spy upon them. What else," she added, with a disdainful toss of the head, "have I placed you here for?"

"Since it is your wish," replied Mrs. Brooks, in a submissive tone, "I shall not fail to do so."

"Of course it is my wish. That bell again! His lordship grows impatient—never easy but when I am with him. We will speak further of this in the morning."

So saying, the governess left the boudoir to take her coffee with the earl, who was so accustomed to her society at such times, that he would not receive it from any hands but hers.

"Infidel and hypocrite!" murmured the nurse, "I

have already proved her, from her own confessions—but the last mask has not fallen yet. And I once loved this fiend!" she added; "trusted her—believed in her friendship and goodness of heart. Heart!" she repeated, bitterly; "yes, she has a heart—so has the tomb its tenant: corruption reigns in both!"

The suspicions of Mrs. Brooks once aroused, she felt an irresistible desire to be present at the interview between Athalie and the charlatan, and reflected for some time upon the manner of gratifying her curiosity. An idea at last struck her.

Adjoining the boudoir was an alcove, built over one end of the conservatory, which extended the entire length of the south wing of the mansion. A heavy curtain of Utrecht velvet was drawn across the door; the interior of the recess was lit by an alabaster lamp, suspended by silver chains from the ceiling. This the nurse carefully extinguished, and concealed herself behind the massive draperies, in such a manner that, if drawn suddenly aside, they would enfold rather than expose her: so that, without a minute examination, it was scarcely possible for her presence to be detected.

In this spot she remained for more than an hour, breathless as expectation or revenge waiting for its prey. At last she heard the voice of the governess in the corridor, humming the well-known and then popular air of—

"Richard, oh, mon roi!"

"God!" muttered the woman, "with such thoughts and memories, can the murderer sing?"

Athalie entered the boudoir, and threw herself listlessly upon the luxurious muslin in the centre of the room. As the project for which she had summoned Briard to attend her became more and more distinct in its details, her voice gradually dropped, and the last note of the air died away as he tapped at the door of the room.

"Come in!" cried the abandoned woman.

The doctor entered with his usual stealthy step: there was something very cat-like in his noiseless, gliding manner of progression. He walked like a man who feared lest his shadow should betray him.

"Are you alone?" he said.

"Can't you see I am?"

The old man looked carefully round the room: not an object escaped his cold, calculating glance. At last it rested on the velvet curtain which covered the alcove.

"Where does that lead to?" he demanded.

"To a recess from which there is no egress," replied his wife in a tone of irritation—for her brain was filled with the project she had elaborated, and she felt impatient to consult him upon the means of carrying it into execution. "Sit down," she added; "for I have much to say to you."

"Caution is the parent of security!" observed the Frenchman; "a chance given away is a weapon placed in the hands of our enemies, who may or may not strike with it. Our conversation will be all the more satisfactory that it is held without witnesses."

He advanced to the alcove, and, drawing aside one of the curtains, peered into the nook: to all appearance, it was empty.

"Now," he said, drawing a chair near to the spot where his confederate was sitting, "I am ready to attend to you!"

The governess shrugged her shoulders, to intimate that he might have spared himself the useless trouble he had taken, and have done so at first.

"Fish!" muttered her husband; "you are not with the earl. Do not waste your airs and graces upon me, for I presume you did not send for me to quarrel with me?"

"Quarrel with you!" iterated his wife; "I should as soon quarrel with the spleen, in the hope of ridding myself of it. Besides, we are too useful to each other. Tell me," she added, "you who have read so much, and seen even more, what is your opinion of the character of Catherine de Medici?"

"That she was one of the master spirits of the age in which she lived, and worthy to rule the destinies of the nation whose sceptre her husband and sons alternately held, but which she really swayed."

"And do you believe all that is related of her?"

"All!"

"Even to the fact of her causing a draught to be prepared which destroyed the intellect of her own son, whilst it left his bodily health unimpaired, that she might reign in his stead?"

"Even to that," replied the old man, impressively.

"She must have been well served," observed Athalie, musingly.

"Science can do much!" said the doctor.

"Then let it do as much for me!" exclaimed his wife, in a low, hissing tone, which sounded as if the words came from between her clenched teeth; "since the life of the being whom I hate is guarded by our interests, let her reason be made the victim. Whilst I fancied that her days were passed in tears—her nights in prayers—that every minute of her existence

was counted by agonies, I felt satisfied. But now that she knows her son has escaped—that the day of retribution is but postponed, the medal is reversed—my soul is consumed at the thought of her triumph over me."

"And what should I gain by ministering to your vengeance?" demanded Briard, coolly; "supposing that I were capable of composing the draught you require?"

"Independence!" was the reply.

"How to be secured?"

The fiend paused for an instant, for her aversion was struggling with her hatred of the innocent Alice. The latter feeling at last prevailed over every other consideration.

"Hear me!" she said; "I have long been aware of the desire you entertain to retire to Italy. By the sacrifice of my jewels, and a sum which I have saved from the annuity settled upon me by the earl, I can gratify that wish."

"Are you serious?" inquired the man of science.

"Perfectly!"

He stretched forth his long, withered hand, and silently clasped that of the speaker, who returned the pressure.

"It is a compact!" he slowly enunciated; "I know the secret of the composition which reduces reason to drivelling idiocy—leaves the mind a ruin, but the body's health unimpaired. If I consent to this crime, for crime it is, there must be no trifling between us!"

"There shall be none!" answered Athalie, calmly.

"Should you hesitate to complete your promise," resumed the doctor, "my revenge would be fearful. Know," he added, "that I retain your letters—the correspondence which took place before our marriage—the proofs of Madame Duvernay's death, and—"

"Enough!" interrupted his wife; "I might have guessed as much. The first use you made of them was to force me to a marriage which my soul abhorred, and the next—"

"Would be to send you to the scaffold, should you deceive me!" interrupted the man of science.

"Doubtless!" said his wife, bitterly; "doubtless! But this avowal compels me to add another condition."

"Name it!"

"That the letters you speak of shall be given up to me on the receipt of the money."

"Agreed!"

"And the certificate—the only proof of our ill-assorted marriage?"

"Agreed too!" said her husband, in a tone of the most profound indifference; "I know," he continued, "the point at which you aim, and am willing to gratify it. You would be Countess of Moretown—would place upon your brow the coronet of your rival. You will never succeed."

"Why not?" demanded the governess, haughtily.

"For two reasons!" replied Doctor Briard. "The first is, that the life of Alice is positively necessary to the earl."

"The course of nature may remove her?" observed the governess.

"Granted—still you would fail. His lordship is profoundly selfish, and endures your influence rather from habit than affection. As a wife he would fear you. You had much better exert your talent for intrigue by inducing the viscount to espouse our child, who, as yet, has experienced but little of her mother's care."

"I have already informed the earl," exclaimed the unnatural parent, in a dissatisfied tone, "that I expect my niece to pass a year with me in England: that is one step towards it; but time must elapse before that project can be brought to bear. Godfrey is at sea: enough that it shall not be lost sight of. And now tell me," she added, "how long will it take to prepare the draught?"

"Three days."

"And the time for its effects?"

"About a month," answered the charlatan; "its operation is slow, but sure! At first a heavy torpor will steal over the victim, then an indifference to everything around, a distaste of food, and forgetfulness, mingled with occasional outbreaks of passion—these mark the last struggles which take place between reason and idiocy."

Athalie listened to these fearful details with a fiend-like joy. Imagination already painted to her the sufferings of her victim. Again the promise of the independence was renewed, and they parted, mutually satisfied with the devilish compact they had made.

As Doctor Briard left the room, his wife cast a look of mingled hatred and contempt after him, then drew from her bosom the small *flacon* of the poison he had given her on her last visit to the abbey, and pressed it to her lips.

"This shall pay thee!" she murmured, in so low a tone that the concealed witness of their conversation could scarcely catch the words. "Fool—fool! to think that I would live the slave of my own fears—be haunted

by nightly terrors. No; let him but administer to my revenge, and this will settle the long-standing debt between us—the debt of hate."

Replacing the phial in her bosom, she rose from her seat upon the luxurious pile of cushions, where she had sat coiled like a serpent, and, advancing to the mirror opposite, carefully adjusted her hair; then quitted the boudoir, humming the refrain she had sung when she first entered it.

Some time elapsed before the curtains of the alcove were drawn aside, and the nurse ventured to step from her hiding-place. Her countenance was pale with terror—and yet there was an expression of determination in it. Her suspicions were confirmed. The terrible confidence she had overheard proved, beyond a doubt, that she had been made the dupe of the fiend to whom for so many years she had imagined herself bound by the ties of gratitude.

"I cannot reflect here," she said, looking round her with horror; "she may return and read in my tell-tale face the discovery I have made! God will aid me," she added, sinking for an instant on her knees, "and justice nerve me!"

Hastily rising, after a few moments passed in mental prayer, the victim of deceit glided like the shadow of Nemesis from the room, and gained her own chamber unperceived. Once arrived there, she carefully locked the door, and passed the greater part of the night in deciding on her future conduct. When she made her appearance in the morning, to make her report to the governess, her countenance was calm as usual.

(To be continued.)

ANCIENT AND MODERN HUMBUGS OF THE WORLD.

No. 7.—MAGNIFICENT ADVERTISING—POWER OF IMAGINATION.

In the year 1834, Dr. Benjamin Brandreth commenced advertising, "Brandreth's Pills, specially recommended to purify the blood." His office consisted of a room about ten feet square, located in what was then known as the Sun building. He put a large gilt sign over the Sun office, five or six feet wide by the length of the building, which attracted much attention at the time.

Dr. Brandreth had great faith in his pills, and I believe not without reason, for multitudes of persons soon became convinced of the truth of his assertions, that "all diseases arise from impurity or imperfect circulation of the blood, and by purgation with Brandreth's Pills all disease may be cured."

But great and reasonable as might have been the faith of Dr. Brandreth in the efficacy of his pills, his faith in the potency of advertising them was equally strong. Hence he commenced advertising largely in the *Sun* newspaper.

At the commencement of his career, Dr. Brandreth was indebted to Mr. Beach, proprietor of the *Sun*, for encouragement and means of advertising. But this very advertising soon caused his receipts to be enormous. Although the pills were but 1s. 1½d. per box, they were soon sold to such a great extent, that tons of huge cases filled with the "purely vegetable pill" were sent from the new and extensive manufactory every week. Advertisement after advertisement appeared in the newspapers in the shape of learned and scientific pathological dissertations, the very reading of which would tempt a poor mortal to rush for a box of Brandreth's pills; so evident was it (according to the advertisements) that nobody ever had or ever would have "pure blood" until from one to a dozen boxes of the pills had been taken as "purifiers." The ingenuity displayed in concocting these advertisements was superb, and was probably hardly equalled by that required to concoct the pills.

No pain, ache, twinge, or other sensation, good or bad or indifferent, ever experienced by a member of the human family, but was a most irrefragable evidence of the impurity of the blood; and it would have been blasphemy to have denied the "self-evident" theory, that all "diseases arise from impurity or imperfect circulation of the blood, and that by purgation with Brandreth's pills all disease may be cured."

The doctor claims that his grandfather first manufactured the pills in 1751. I suppose this may be true; at all events, no living man will be apt to testify to the contrary. Here is an extract from one of Dr. Brandreth's early advertisements, which will give an idea of his style:

"What has been longest known has been most considered, and what has been most considered is best understood."

"The life of the flesh is in the blood.—Lev. xvii, 2. "Bleeding reduces the vital powers; Brandreth's pills increase them. So in sickness never be bled, especially in dizziness and apoplexy, but always use Brandreth's pills."

"The laws of life are written upon the face of

nature. The tempest, whirlwind and thunderstorm bring health from the solitudes of God. The tides are the daily agitators and purifiers of the mighty world of waters."

"What these providential means are as purifiers of the atmosphere or air, Brandreth's pills are to man."

This splendid system of advertising, and the almost reckless outlay which was required to keep it up, challenged the admiration of the business community. In the course of a few years his office was enlarged, and he was finally, in the year 1836, compelled to remove his manufactory to more extensive premises, where such perfectly incredible quantities of Brandreth's pills have been manufactured and sold that it would hardly be safe to give the statistics. Suffice it to say that the only "humbug" which I suspect in connection with the pills was the very harmless and unobjectionable, yet novel, method of advertising them; and as the doctor amassed a great fortune by their manufacture, this very fact is *prima facie* evidence that the pill was a valuable purgative.

A very funny incident occurred to me in connection with this great pill. In the year 1836, while I was travelling, and during my stay at Natchez, I became convinced, by reading Dr. Brandreth's advertisements, that I needed his pills. Indeed, I there read the proof that every symptom that I experienced, either in imagination or in reality, rendered their extensive consumption absolutely necessary to preserve my life.

I purchased a box of Brandreth's pills. The effect was miraculous! Of course it was just what the advertisement told me it would be. I purchased half-a-dozen boxes. They were all used up in a very short time, and I was a confirmed disciple of the blood theory. Then I laid in a dozen boxes. I was a profitable customer, and had become thoroughly convinced that the only real "greenhorns" in the world were those who preferred meat or bread to Brandreth's pills.

I took them morning, noon, and night. In fact, the advertisements announced that one could not take too many; for if one box was sufficient to purify the blood, eleven extra boxes would have no injurious effect.

I arrived home in June 1838, and by that time I had become such a firm believer in the efficacy of Brandreth's pills that I hardly stopped long enough to speak with my family before I hastened to the "principal office" of Doctor Brandreth, to congratulate him on being the greatest public benefactor of the age.

I found the doctor "at home," and introduced myself without ceremony. I told him my experience. He was delighted. I next heartily endorsed every word stated in his advertisements. He was not surprised, for he knew the effects of his pills were such as I described.

Still he was elated in having another witness whose extensive experiments with his pills were so eminently satisfactory.

The doctor and myself were both happy—he in being able to do so much good to mankind, I in being the recipient of such untold benefits through his valuable discovery.

At last the doctor chanced to say that he wondered how I happened to get his pills in Natchez, "for," said he, "I have no agent there as yet."

"Oh!" I replied, "I always bought my pills at the drug stores."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the doctor, "then they were all counterfeits! vile impositions! poisonous compounds! I never sell a pill to a druggist—I never permit an apothecary to handle one of my pills. But they counterfeited them by the bushel; the unprincipled, heartless, murderous impostors!"

I need not say I was surprised. Was it possible, then, that my imagination had done all this business, and that I had been cured by poisons which I supposed were Brandreth's pills? I confess I laughed heartily, and told the doctor that, after all, it seemed the counterfeits were as good as the real pills, provided the patient had sufficient faith.

P. T. BARNUM.

(To be continued.)

THE FORCE OF IMAGINATION.—Once, at a large dinner party, Mr. Rogers was speaking of an inconvenience arising from the custom, then commencing, of having windows formed of one large sheet of plate-glass. He said that a short time ago he sat at dinner with his back to one of these single panes of plate-glass: it appeared to him that the window was wide open; and such was the force of his imagination, that he actually caught cold. It so happened that I was sitting just opposite to the poet. Hearing this remark, I immediately said, "Dear me, how odd it is, Mr. Rogers, that you and I should make such a very different use of the faculty of imagination. When I go to the house of a friend in the country, and unex-

pectedly remain for the night, having no night-cap, I should naturally catch cold. By trying a piece of pack-thread tightly round my head, I go to sleep imagining that I have a night-cap on; consequently I catch no cold at all." This really produced much amusement in all around, who supposed that I had improvised it; but, odd as it may appear, it is a practice I have often resorted to. Mr. Rogers, who knew full well the respect and regard I had for him, saw at once that I was relating a simple fact, and joined cordially in the merriment it excited.—*Passages from the Life of a Philosopher.* By Charles Babbage.

INSTANCES OF LONGEVITY.

SETTING aside the recorded examples of biblical longevity, English and European history afford some striking instances of the attainment of great age. Roger Bacon says he has spoken with several persons worthy of credit, who knew a man aged nine hundred years! This man reached this age by means of a sovereign preservative. The truth of this is said to be fully established, for the man obtained a certificate of the fact, in the year 1200, from Pope Alexis the Third. Matthew Paris has recorded, in his history of England, that Cartaphilus, the wandering Jew, was recognized in this country in 1229. Less strong food for faith than these narratives from English history may be obtained from the annals of Portugal. Lopez de Castenda, King of Portugal, being in the year 1535 Viceroy of India, a man was brought to him who, it was proved by testimony, had already lived three hundred and thirty-five years. This tercentenary had renewed his youth several times from hoary age, and had thrice changed his hair, his teeth, and his complexion. His name was Hugo de Acuna. A physician, who felt his pulse, testified that in his three hundred and thirty-fifth year, he had the vigour, as he had the black hair and black beard of a young man. If we could but get back this lost secret of growing young again, we all might have the pleasure of believing in Acuna and Cartaphilus, *et hoc genus omne!*

Meanwhile, we may turn to personages whose longevity is of less difficult belief, although taxing credulity very heavily. A dozen persons might be picked out from the pages of serious authors on longevity, whose united ages equal the eighteen hundred and sixty years of the Christian era. It is, indeed, recorded that one McCreem died in England in 1696, aged two hundred. However deficient this group of cases may be in satisfactory proofs, there is no scientific improbability connected with them. The science of life knows nothing of any sovereign preservative of youth, or of any elixir for making the old young, but it compares the periods of gestation, of growth in height, and of decay among the mammals, and concludes that man is a mammal built to last ninety or a hundred years; and who, in favourable circumstances, may last—there is no saying how long beyond his natural term. Physiology, in a word, furnishes no grounds for doubting the existence of men nearly two hundred years. Haller, Duferand Plourens, the authorities on the subject of longevity, indeed allege reasons for expecting their frequent appearance in favourable circumstances; and Dr. Farr asserts that, as a rule, the duration of life ought to be double what it is at present.

Thomas Parr may have done penance in a church porch for a fault of his youth in his one hundred and fortieth year, and died by accident when he was one hundred and fifty-two; Henry Jenkins may have led a home laden with arrows to the battle of Flodden, when twelve years old, and may have lived through the Reformation and the Revolution, dying at the age of one hundred and sixty-nine, when the constitution which remains to the present day was finally set up; and Kentigern, better known as Saint Mungo of Scotland, may have died when one hundred and eighty-five years old. But belief in these and similar instances of marvellous longevity is only a pleasing exercise of imagination which is not forbidden by any warnings of scientific improbability.

When public honours have been paid to centenarians of this category, there is some excuse for credulity. Parr lies in Westminster Abbey. Jenkins was buried by national subscription. The poor old woman to whom the Empress Queen of Germany paid a visit—no doubt with an eye to pictorial effect, because her Majesty heard she was sorry that she had become too infirm to go out and see her beloved sovereign—was probably a genuine centenarian. Philippe Herbelot was, it may be believed, one hundred and fourteen when, as a centenarian pensioner, he presented Louis XIV. with a bouquet on his birthday.

"What have you done," asked the king, "that you have reached so great an age?"

"From the age of fifty, please your majesty, I have shut my heart and opened my cellar."

The sarcasm was so merited, that if it never were spoken, it ought to have been.

In despotic governments, one of the arts of governing is getting up shows and scenes; and in France, where the party uppermost has always been despotic, there have occurred some theatrical displays of reverence for extreme old age.

On the twentieth of October, 1789, the National Assembly was sitting, with M. Fretau in the chair, when it was announced that "a man, aged one hundred and twenty years, wished to see the Assembly which had freed his country from the bonds of slavery." The Abbe Gregoire proposed that out of respect for age the members of the Assembly should rise upon his entering; a proposal which passed with acclamation. The centenarian was led into the room by his family, and the members rose. Amid great applause, he walked up to an arm-chair in front of the secretaries' table, and was requested to put on his hat. He produced his ticket of baptism proving that he was born at Saint Sorbin, of Charles Jacques and Jennie Bailly, on the 10th of October, 1669. He had maintained himself by his labour, and had fulfilled all the duties of his station, until he was in his one hundred and fifth year, when the king gave him a pension of two hundred livres. The Assembly voted him a contribution, and the author of a plan of national education suggested that the august old man should be lodged in the Patriotic School and waited upon by the pupils of all ranks, especially by the children whose fathers were killed in attacking the Bastille. "Do whatever you like with him," exclaimed M. le Mirabeau, "but leave him free." The president then said to the old man: "The Assembly is afraid lest the length of the sitting should fatigue you, and therefore you may withdraw. May you long enjoy the sight of your country become free."

Napoleon Bonaparte, when First Consul, decorated two centenarians with the medal of the Legion of Honour, before a large assembly in the nave of the Hotel of the Invalides. The First Consul placed them near himself, and took them home to dine with him.

The restored Bourbons did not, of course, forget the effect of these scenes upon an imaginative nation. On the 25th of August, 1822, the equestrian statue of Louis XIV. was inaugurated upon the Place of Victories. In front of the statue an arm-chair was placed for Pierre Huet, the Father of the French army. He was dressed in the uniform of the regiment in which he had served, the Royal Cavalry. The expression of his countenance was venerable and handsome, and he wore a long white beard, and his voice was strong and sonorous. In his one hundred and seventh year, he had preserved all his faculties, and his conversation was very agreeable. The President of the Seine, on presenting him with a cross of honour in the name of Louis the XVIII., said—

"Contemporary of Louis XIV., receive this symbol of honour! The king decorates in you the Father of the French army. Born a subject of the great king, you have seen the generations succeed each other, and you are a witness that his reign, like his glory, is immortal."

The old man said he felt deeply an occurrence so glorious, in such a long life. Then walking across the place, with a firm step, to the platform of the ministers and marshals, he received their congratulations.

"My sons, my dear sons," he said, "live long, live as I have done, to love and serve France."

These shows of respect for age are characteristic of the art of governing by scenes.

SCIENCE.

VELOCITY OF LIGHT.—Light which is probably an extremely subtle fluid, penetrates with facility bodies of very close texture and great density, and travels with the amazing velocity of 10,000,000 miles in a minute. Dr. Bradley, above a century ago, inferred, from his observations on the heavenly bodies, that the light comes to us from the sun in about eight minutes; Sir David Brewster, that light moves with a velocity of 192,500 miles in a second of time, and travels from the sun to the earth in seven minutes and a half. Sir John Herschel mentions that a ray of light travels over 192,000 miles in one second of time. Yet Laplace states that light employs 571 seconds in coming from the sun to the earth. This calculation makes the time nine minutes and a half—nearly one-third more than the calculation usually adopted at present.

TELEGRAPHY AT RIFLE RANGES.—A novel apparatus has been introduced at Wimbledon, under the auspices of the Count de Gendres, for the purpose of enabling a firing party to maintain instant communication with the marker at the butts, by means of the electric telegraph. The arrangement is of the simplest kind, and will be understood in a very few words. At the firing point is a small oak post about three feet high, from the base of which wires coated with gutta percha run to the projecting mantlet at the other

extremity of the range, inside of which, and quite under the control of the marker at the butts, is a small electric battery, a call-bell, or "alarm," and an interrupter for the purpose of braking the electric current. As soon as the person about to fire is ready, a small button on the summit of the post is pressed down with the finger; this completes the electric circuit, and the bell at the butts immediately begins to ring, at the same time that a needle on the dial of the indicator fixed to the post is deflected, showing to the parties who have set the apparatus in motion that the bell is ringing to a certainty at the other end. It continues to do so till the marker in his turn presses his finger upon the brass knob of the interruption, which breaks the electric circuit, stops the ringing of the bell, and the needle at the firing end of the range immediately resumes its vertical position. Both parties then know that all is ready and safe, and the shot is fired. The perfect manner in which space is annihilated by this little instrument must be seen to be believed. It is asserted that in the course of experiments made by the Long Range Club at Hounslow, signals were made after the shots had been fired and answered before the bullets reached the targets (?).

AN AMERICAN IRON-CLAD.

A VERY powerful Monitor is now approaching completion in the Philadelphia navy yard. She is thus described:—

The hull of the *Tonawanda* is one solid mass of live oak. Her extreme length is 272 ft. 9 in.; length between perpendiculars, 260 ft.; beam moulded, 40 ft.; beam extreme over armour, 53 feet; depth of hold, 12 ft. 2 in.; area of greatest transverse section, 568 square ft.; depth of armour amidships, 5 ft. 9 in.; weight of wooden hull per section, 1,886 tons; launching draught, mean, 8 ft. 9 in.; load draught, 12 ft. 2 in.; displacement, when ready for sea, 3,800 tons; projection of overhang, 12 in. At the underside of the beam, at the load line, the clamp or backing is 3 ft. thick, reduced to 7 in. at a distance of 5 ft. 9 in., falling in fair with the ceiling. Thickness of timber in hull, 9 in.; planking, 7 in.; lagging, 12 in.; armour, 5-in. plates—thus offering a solid resistance of 38 in. of live oak and 5 in. of iron-plating, to which must be added the zones or armour-bearers, which pass longitudinally around and encircle the whole ship. They are of iron, 6 in. deep, by 4 in. thick, and placed 4 in. apart, making the plating in reality 11 in. thick; the weight of the side armour and zones is 729,494 lbs. The deck beams are of oak, 12 by 14, and 36 in. from centre to centre. The deck consists of, first, an oak planking 6½ in. thick, then 2½-in. iron plates—on top of this comes a yellow pine planking 3 in. thick.

The *Tonawanda* has two turrets, the forward one carrying the pilot-house. They are 23 ft. diameter inside, 9 ft. high, and composed of eleven 1-in. plates. Each turret, with machinery, weighs 816,340 lbs., pilot-house, 45,400 lbs. Four 15-in. guns comprise her armament, each gun, with its carriage, weighing 68,000 lbs.

The amount of fighting expected may be judged from the fact of her carrying 12,000 lbs. of powder, 50,000 lbs. of shell, 60,000 lbs. of solid shot. The magazine and shell-rooms are on either side of the turrets.

Her engines, by Merrick and Sons, are horizontal, direct-acting, 30-in. cylinders, 21-in. stroke. There are two screws of brass, 10 ft. diameter, and 14 ft. pitch.

Steam is supplied by two of Martin's vertical tube boilers, having a front of 38 ft. 6 in., 11 ft. deep, 9½ ft. high. There are 16 furnaces in all, each 6½ ft. by 3 ft. Each screw is driven by its own independent engine.

By this arrangement the ship can be steered by the propellers alone, in case the rudder should become damaged or carried away. The anchor, when let go, takes the chain directly from the locker without overhauling. It can wear away chain with perfect safety, and is easily controlled while riding heavily. In one minute the chain is passed to the captain, and all is then ready to heave away. In ordinary cases the chain is taken in at the rate of three fathoms per minute when the anchor is chain-bitted. This is all performed without handling, the chain paying itself in and out of the locker.

HEAT FROM THE STARS.—It is a startling fact that if the earth were dependent alone upon the sun for heat, it would not get heat enough to keep existence in animal and vegetable life upon its surface. It results from the researches of Pouillet, that the stars furnish heat enough in the course of the year to melt a crust of ice seventy-five feet thick—almost as much as is supplied by the sun. This may appear strange when we consider how immeasurably small must be the amount of heat from any one of those distant bodies. But the surprise vanishes when we remember that the whole firmament is so thickly sown with stars, that in some places thousands are crowded together within a space no greater than that occupied

by the full moon. The eye cannot see more than a thousand at the same time, in the clearest heaven, yet the number is probably infinite. From the first to the sixth magnitude, inclusive, the total number of visible stars is 3,128.

IMPORTANT EXPERIMENTS AT SHOEBOURNNESS.

PERHAPS the most important firing and progress at Shoeburyness ever yet recorded, lately took place. The question to be decided was no less than the continuance or the abandonment of the construction of the Spithead forts. The whole problem lay in the amount of damage which a heavy gun can inflict at a range of say 4,000 yards.

In order to ascertain this, it is by no means necessary that such a range should actually be employed; a little calculation is sufficient to prove that a gun, the service charge of which is 90 lbs. of powder, and the initial velocity of the projectiles of which is 1,200 ft. per second, will, when the initial velocity is reduced to 860 ft. per second by a charge of 40 lbs. of powder, give the equivalent result to firing at 4,000 yards, by merely firing at 200 yards.

Accordingly, the 600-pr. has been fired with 40 lbs. to ascertain what the execution of that gun would be at 4,000 yards, when fired with 90 lbs. of powder.

The execution was terrible; much more so than when the same gun was fired at the same range with 90 lbs. of powder. Both shots will very likely long remain on the same target, so that what we are here stating admits of very easy verification.

The target fired at was the box oak one, faced with Messrs. J. Brown and Co.'s 64-in. plates, and the point of impact was the deck or deck part, so that behind the 64-in. armour-plates there were little less than three yards of solid oak and old iron target. The shot struck the armour-plate, went through it, throwing an armour-plate fragment of 2 cwt. a distance of 25 yards, together with a perfect shower of massive oak fragments.

Nor was that the whole damage. On inspection it was found that the woodwork was very much crushed in.

On the spot, among the scientific men and officers present, there was but one opinion, and that was, that the strongest iron-clad that would swim would be smashed to atoms by the 600-pounder gun at 4,000 yards.

On the spot it was also stated that the Americans had not been able to fire more than 40 lbs. of cake-powder in their 600-pounder gun, and that one of them had burst with that charge. Cake-powder possesses 15 per cent. less strength than our powder.

It is hardly necessary that we should add one word to this just now; the facts speak for themselves.

FACETIÆ.

THE Australian astronomer denies that he predicted a comet for 1865 with a tail to destroy the world. Who originated the tale, if Mr. Neumayer disowns it?

LORD ELCHO, in his recent address to the Volunteers, says that only one complaint was made last year at Wimbledon, and that was by a gentleman who said he found an earwig in his hat.

THE Shakespeare monument mania has taken a fresh turn. It is proposed to get 3,000*l.* by a penny subscription from workmen, and to erect a marble statue with the copper.

Who finds all the umbrellas that everybody loses? Every man we meet loses the umbrella he buys, but we have never got acquainted with the man that finds them. Can anyone answer the question before the next rain?

"THE GIFT OF GAB."

SIR ROBERT PEEL, on more than one occasion invited Mr. Stephenson to Drayton. He refused at first, from indisposition to "mix in fine company," but ultimately went. On one occasion an animated discussion took place between himself and Dr. Buckland, on one of his favourite theories as to the formation of coal. But the result was that Dr. Buckland, a much greater master of tongue fence than Stephenson, completely silenced him. Next morning, before breakfast, when he was walking in the grounds, deeply pondering, Sir William Follet came up and asked him what he was thinking about. "Why, Sir William, I am thinking over that argument I had with Buckland last night. I know I am right, and if I had only the command of words which he has, I'd have beaten him."

"Let me know all about it," said Sir William, "and I'll see what I can do for you."

The two sat down in an arbour, when the astute lawyer made himself thoroughly acquainted with the points of the case, entering into it with all the zeal of an advocate about to plead the interests of his client. After he had mastered the subject, Sir William rose up, rubbing his hands with glee, "Now I am ready for him."

Sir Robert Peel was acquainted with the plot, and adroitly introduced the subject of the controversy after dinner. The result was that in the argument that followed, the man of science was overcome by the man of law, and Sir William Follet had at all points the mastery over Dr. Buckland. "What do you say, Mr. Stephenson?" asked Sir Robert, laughing.

"Why," said he, "I will only say this: That of all the powers above and under the earth, there seems to me to be no power so great as the gift of the gab."

COURTSHIP A LA MODE.

(*Lover and rich mistress walking in garden.*)
Lover (log.) My lady's cheeks are like the rose
Aside. (The yellow rose, I mean;) My lady's eyes are like the sloes
Aside. (When they are very green;) My lady's lips are like the cherry
Aside. (The white one—not the red;) My lady is a diamond
Aside. (A—diamond black lead.) My lady's teeth are sets of pearls
Aside. (But then they're not her own;) My lady is a rich ripe peach
Aside. (Because her heart's a stone;) My lady is a spring bouquet
Aside. (When it is very old;) My lady is the queen of flowers
Aside. (She is my *Mari-Gold.*)

WHICH IS DRYDEN'S HOUSE?—At one of many breakfasts we had the honour and good fortune to enjoy at No. 12, St. James's-place, we found the poet Rogers in his drawing-room in a more than usually pleasant vein. Taking our hand, holding it, and leading us to the window (half smiling, half laughing all the time) he exclaimed, "I have an anecdote for you, and in your way:—Coming from the City yesterday, I took Fetter-lane, Fleet-street, in my road, that I might see—reverentially—the newly-discovered house in which Dryden is said to have lived. I asked for the house, and could for a long time obtain no better reply to my repeated question, 'Which is Dryden's house?' than 'Dryden—Dryden' (the policeman I spoke to thinking for a time, with his finger, Sterne-like, to his ear)—'Dryden,—is he backward with his rent?' That policeman knew to the life the poetical character. I went laughing home, and, as you see, am laughing still."

THE LOBSTER.

A FABLE.

A lobster who had changed his hue
 From green to red, as others do,
 By fairy aid survived the pain,
 And lived to join his friends again.
 Now, when his fellow lobsters note
 The splendour of his crimson coat,
 They fain would know how it could be
 That such a dingy chap as he,
 Had managed, since he left his bed,
 To get that brilliant suit of red!
 The lobster, smiling, answered, "Well—
 The story isn't hard to tell:
 I'm sure you'll say the cost was small—
 'Twas being *boiled*!—faith—that was all!"

MORAL.

This simple tale perchance may bear
 A lesson worthy of our care:
 Before we envy outward show,
 And, in our folly, wish to share it,
 'Twere well, perhaps, if we could know
 What pain it cost the fools who wear it!

J. G. S.

BROTHERLY LOVE.—A little boy, seeing two nestling birds peck at each other, inquired of his elder brother what they were doing. "They are quarrelling," was the reply. "No," replied the other, "that cannot be, for they are brothers."

The blue horse, which was spoken of as about to be sent to London, is going on a tour of engagements in the country, and not coming to London yet. We further hear of this eccentric animal that it eats a slice or two of beef a day, drinks olive oil, and is fond of a cup of tea or coffee, of which it gets a due share. Naturally it smokes a cigar and reads the *Times*.

The Duke of Nemours once sent his steward to call upon an artist on whom he wished to confer a snuff-box as a mark of his approbation, to ascertain if such a present would be acceptable. The offer was received with enthusiasm. "Where shall I send it?" inquired the envoy. "Oh, if you will be kind enough," replied the grateful artist, "to pawn it on the way, you can let me have the money."

DRAWING AN INFERENCE.—The beadle of a country parish in Scotland is usually called the minister's man. To one of these, who had gone through a long course of parish official life, a gentleman one day remarked: "John, you have been so long about the minister's hand that I dare say you could preach a sermon now." John modestly replied, "Oh, na, sir, I couldna preach a sermon, but, maybe, I could draw

an inference." "Well, John," said the gentleman, humouring the vanity of the old beadle, "what inference could you draw from the text, 'A — snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure'?" "Weel, sir, I would draw this inference—'He had snuff a lang time afore he would fatten upon't.'"

MANAGING A HUSBAND.

"How do you manage your husband, Mrs. Croaker?" "Such a job as I have of it with Smith."

"Easiest thing in the world, my dear; give him a twitch backward when you want him to go forward. For instance, you see, to-day I had a loaf of cake to make."

"Well, do you suppose because my body is in the pastry room, my soul need be there too? Not a bit of it. I am thinking of all sorts of celestial things all the while."

"Now, Croaker has a way of tagging round at my heels, and bringing me plump down in the midst of my aerial flights, by asking me the price of sugar I am using."

"Well, you see, it drives me frantic; and when I woke up this morning, and saw this furious storm, I knew I had him on my hands for the day, unless I managed right; so I told him that I hoped he wouldn't go out to catch his death this weather; that if he was not capable of taking care of himself, I should do it for him; that it was very lonesome rainy days, and that I wanted him to stay home and talk with me; at any rate he mustn't go out, and I hid his umbrella and India-rubbers. Well, of course he was right up (just as I had expected), and in less than ten minutes was streaking down the street at the rate of ten miles an hour."

"You see there's nothing like understanding human nature; no woman should be married till she is thoroughly posted up in this branch of education."

TAKING IT LITERALLY.—A blind man who does or did walk the streets of Birmingham asking for alms on the scriptural plea of the cup of cold water, some kind little girl brought him the water instead of a penny. Whereupon the Brummagem Bartemus, with a sagacity which would make him invaluable as an officer or a member of any bazaar committee, asked, "Is it hard, my dear?" "Yes, sir," was the timid response. "Ah, then, I don't drink it."

FISHING.—We have often wondered why gentlemen were so passionately fond of fishing as to be able to spend long summer days angling for some cautious, finny creature, who would not permit himself to be caught at last. But we fancy we have discovered the secret at last, as you may if you take the trouble of inquiring into the "little bills" footed on such occasions. Among the necessities for a fishing excursion, you will find the most wonderful things: ale, lobster-salad, champagne and turtle-soup, &c., &c.; and will discover that generally there is a very fine hotel near the spot where fishers most do congregate. Take our word for it, the chief attraction to these devotees of the rod and line is not the fish, but the "bite."

EXTENSIVE SALE OF AN EX-SHAKESPEARIAN COMMITTEEMAN.—"I don't think," said a would-be literary duke, "you can find a single Irish character in all the works of Shakespeare." "Yes, you can," boldly ejaculated young Edmund, "for I can cite two—Miss O'Phelia, and Corry O'Lanous." The noble duke instantly started for Manchester.—*Punch*

LATEST AMERICAN TELEGRAMS.

(Condensed and Translated.)

Grays reduced to grant.
 Sheridan's Rivals successful.
 Hunter hunted.
 Harker toasted.
 Macpherson not an Ossy 'un; his cavalry cut up.
 Thomas's men rendered fit for Guy's Pillow on Sherman's rear.—*Punch*

Park Keeper: "Don't you know it's agin the hest o' parliament a fishin'?"—Prisoner: "Plase, S', ain't been a fishin', S'."—Park Keeper: "But you've been a haddin' and abettin'."—Prisoner: "Oh no, S'; 'po' n' word, S', ain't been a bettin', S'; ain't go no money, S'."—*Punch*

MAXIMS FOR THE MEAN.

WHY not use that dirty envelope? Your correspondent is bound to think it was soiled by the postman.

You can turn your linen-collars, and so save in the washing bill. But they fray sooner, from the harder rubbing required.

Try to get your host to talk you down to the door. You cannot tip his servants under his eye.

A cigar-case with a complex fastening, over which you bungle and growl, will often draw a cigar from a friend who wants you to light up and come on.

You can hardly be such a fool as to have smaller change than a half-sovereign about you when you have offered to share the cab that is going to set you down.

Tip the boxkeeper a shilling, and a liberal friend will probably stand in for the party, and sherry and seltzer for you—a good bargain.

Wait, and be last, in leaving a railway carriage. It is the safest, and you can then take the abandoned newspapers, and may get an umbrella.

Always recognise, and ostentatiously assist one disreputable member of your family. He will be your excuse for never giving a single shilling to any other relation. He has half-ruined you, &c.—*Punch*.

THE LATEST NEWS FROM WASHINGTON.—Here is the latest discovery in America, which we recommend as a good thing for investment to the attentive consideration of all washerwomen: "A veritable soap-mine has been discovered in Esmeralda, California. The vein is 10 ft. wide, 600 ft. long, and runs very deep." What "lathering" good dividends, as an Irishman would say, a soap-mine must yield! We should be afraid, however, of the speculation ourselves, lest it should turn out only another exemplification of the old saying that "the earth hath bubbles," and, as the Stock Exchange knows, we have enough of those in our own country, without going to California for them.—*Punch*.

AGRICULTURAL INTELLIGENCE.—Why does a farmer keep his coat buttoned? To secure his half-vest in good condition.—*Fun*.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.—Paul Bedford has just published his "Reminiscences," asserting that he aims at recording "facts," not "fancies." What should Paul tell a lie for? Of course everybody will believe him, his boy.—*Fun*.

TASTE.—Customer: "My eye, ain't they fine 'uns neither?" Coster: "Fine 'uns! I should just think they was, too. Why, if I was as much a haricoot as I am a hepicure, I'd never eat no other sort, I wouldn't."—*Fun*.

FRIGHTFUL APPARITION.—The neighbourhood of Teddington was the other day thrown into a state of considerable alarm and excitement by the ghastly appearance of a human figure with a pair of skulls in a small boat on the river.—*Fun*.

HARD LINES.

Officer: "What do you mean by coming on parade in that state, sir? Why, you haven't shaved, you dirty fellow."

Soldier: "If yer please, sir, I'm growing my whiskers."

Officer: "Oh, you are, are you? Well, you've plenty of time to do that off parade. I'd strongly advise you to shave 'em off before you come on. Two days' pack-drill. Right about face."—*Fun*.

AN ALTERATION, BUT NOT AN IMPROVEMENT.—We understand that the Germans in general and the Prussians and Austrians in particular, regarding themselves as the most civilized and enlightened people upon earth, have determined to make the following alteration in the decalogue. The word "not" in the eighth commandment is to be omitted. Consequently, in future, instead of "Thou shalt not steal," the command will read, "Thou shalt steal;" and under present circumstances, "Schleswig, if thou can'st," is to be added.—*Fun*.

A CURIOUS OCCUPATION.—At the Surrey Sessions, the other day, one of the grand jury was about to be fined £5 for non-attendance, when it turned out that he was the steward of a Hamburg packet. The clerk of the peace observed that he was described in the jury list as a gentleman, and wished to know how the error arose. "The sheriff's officer said when he served the summons he ascertained that Mr. Coleman followed the sea, and that he had altered his description." "Following the sea?" must be rather a monotonous occupation—he must feel terribly tired! Did it not occur to the clerk of the peace that the man who follows the C must be the D—himself?—*Fun*.

STATISTICS.

The official report of the Sheffield inundation gives the following returns:—238 persons were killed, 138 being men; 87 mills and factories were partly or wholly destroyed; also 21 corn mills, 28 workshops, 415 dwelling-houses, 24 breweries and public-houses, 3 tan-yards, 20 bridges, 74 buildings not otherwise described, and 4,478 yards of fence walling. Besides these an immense number of buildings were flooded, including no less than 4,086 private dwellings.

SALTPETRE AND NITRE.—A House of Commons return, just issued, shows that the imports of saltpetre into this country since 1860 have been—1860, 329,206 cwt.; 1861, 313,803 cwt.; 1862, 443,248 cwt.; 1863, 404,765 cwt.; and in 1864 (to May 31), 139,496 cwt. The imports of cubic nitre for the same term were—1860, 745,559 cwt.; 1861, 512,860 cwt.; 1862, 794,318 cwt.; 1863, 539,558 cwt., and 1864

(to May 31) 304,254 cwt. The bulk of the saltpetre was from British India, and of nitre from Peru and Chili, inconsiderable quantities only coming from other countries. During the above period there was exported from the United Kingdom, of saltpetre, refined and unrefined—1860, 76,259 cwt.; 1861, 58,055 cwt.; 1862, 131,183 cwt.; 1863, 74,779 cwt.; and 1864 (to May 31), 41,406 cwt. There was exported of cubic nitre—1860, 69,441 cwt.; 1861, 47,434 cwt.; 1862, 74,712 cwt.; 1863, 79,594 cwt.; and 1864 (to May 31), 41,030 cwt.

THE CAVALIER'S SONG.

My foot in the stirrup, my hand on the rein,
I climb the tall mountain, I dash o'er the plain;
You eagle that swims on his broad wings on high—
I envy him not in his flight through the sky.
So swift is the speed of my gallant grey horse,
That his shadow can hardly keep pace with our course.

We ford the deep river, the wood-path we tread,
The forest flies past us, beside, overhead;
Still answering the clink of the spur with a neigh,
My tireless steed rushes on and away.
His uddle I never appealed to in vain,
With my foot in the stirrup, my hand on the rein.

He knoweth, my brave steed—or seemeth to know,
Who waits for his rider in yonder chateau,
Whose delicate fingers have played with his mane,
Caressing his dark neck again and again.
Then speed, like the shaft to the target, away.
And Inez shall bless thee, my own gallant gray.

H. R. D.

GEMS.

THE SPIDER AND THE BEE.—The spider is wiser than the bee. The former sucks poison from everything, and the latter honey. So the former isn't robbed, and the latter is.

LOVE changes all into splendour, even tears and the grave; and before us, life, like the declining sun of the longest day of the north sea, touches only with its rim the passing earth, and rises again, like morning, in the arch of heaven.

On the blue mountains of our dim childhood, toward which we ever turn and look, stand the mothers who marked out to us from thence our life; the most blessed age must be forgotten ere we can forget the warmest heart.

REAL POWER.—Wealth, we are told, is power; talent is power, and knowledge is power. But there is a mightier force in the world than either of these—a power which wealth is not rich enough to purchase, nor genius subtle enough to refute, nor knowledge wise enough to overreach, nor authority imposing enough to silence. They all tremble in its presence. It is truth—the really most potent element of social or individual life. Though tossed upon the billows of popular commotion, or cast into the seven-fold furnace of persecution, or trampled into the dust by the iron heel of power, truth is the one indestructible thing in this world that loses in no conflict, suffers from no misuse and abuse, and maintains its vitality and completeness after every assault.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

LIVE fish, pickerel or trout, will keep a cistern free from worms, dirt, or smell.

SEIDLITZ Powders.—The blue paper should contain two drachms of the potassa-tartrate of soda, mixed with two scruples of bicarbonate of soda. The white paper should contain thirty-five grains of finely powdered tartaric acid. The two papers constitute one draught.

SOILED CARPETS.—When soiled, carpets may be cleaned after beating with the following mixture: Two gallons of water, with half a pound of soft soap dissolved in it, to which add 4 ozs. of liquid ammonia. This may be rubbed on with a flannel cloth, and the carpet then rubbed dry.

CEMENT FOR THE MOUTHS OF CORKED BOTTLES.—Melt together a quarter of a pound of sealing wax, the same quantity of resin, and 2 oz. of beeswax. When it froths, stir with a tallow candle. As soon as it melts, dip the mouth of the bottle into it. This is an excellent thing to exclude the air from such things as are injured by being exposed to it.

A PAMPHLET by Dr. Carl Both, an educated German physician, gives a new theory and cure of tuberculous consumption. The doctor finds the origin of the disease in non-use of the lungs to their full extent; and his method of treatment, accordingly, consists in the extension and filling with air of all lung vesicles through inhalation and pressing of air into the lungs;

in the exercise of the muscles, the cultivation of action of the skin through baths and frictions, and in the administration of food according to the case. He has no specific remedy, but his treatment varies with every case, the greatest force of it lying in the nourishment of patients.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE five vessels of war which were built for the Confederates in France have been sold to the Prussians.

THERE is a proposal to plant trees on the Thames Embankment very thickly, so as to make it a fine boulevard.

A FOREIGN journal goes into figures to prove that Mdlle. Patti, if she sings for twenty years, will make 1,000,000 sterling. We hope she may.

If there were a Miss Robinson Crasoe on a desolate island, with no one to please but her own reflection in the water, she would yet every day make and wear the newest fashions.

IN 1766, 207,600 lbs. of powder, which was stored in the church of St. Nazaire, in Brescia, Italy, was fired by a stroke of lightning, and the explosion reduced about one-sixth of the city to ruins, and killed 3,000 of the inhabitants.

It is not generally known that the Imperial Guard goes into mourning at the death of any European Sovereign. On the death of the King of Wurtemberg, recently, it was put into mourning. Officer's mourning is ten days long, crape on arm and sword-hilt, and for ten days after on the sword-hilt only.

THE French authorities have made a considerable grant of land to a wealthy Englishman in the districts of Mataica and Atimaono-Papara (Society Islands) for agricultural purposes, especially the cultivation of cotton, and have authorized him to introduce a thousand free Chinese labourers.

AMONG some discoveries recently made at Pompeii, one of the most curious is a well in which excellent water exists. Up to the moment of making this discovery, no well had ever been met with at Pompeii containing water. M. de Luca has undertaken its analysis.

MR. BROWN, late of Tunbridge Wells, was backed by a gentleman to hit ninety-nine penny pieces thrown up in one hundred for £10, and he hit the whole hundred with one gun only. The same gentleman backed him to kill nineteen birds out of twenty-one; he killed twenty.

THE news has arrived in Paris of the destruction by fire of two-thirds, at least, of the town of Contrevoz, in the department of the Ain. On hearing of this disaster, the Emperor immediately subscribed 4,000*fr.* for the relief of those who have most suffered from it.

A CORRESPONDENCE is published, from which it appears that, at the suggestion of the Queen, the birthday of the late Prince Consort, which falls on the 26th of August, is henceforth to be observed by the Royal Horticultural Society as a holiday, when the gardens at South Kensington will be thrown open gratuitously to the public.

IN taking down an old building in France a few days since, the owner discovered beneath a block of granite a trunk containing gold coins to the value of 60,000 francs. They were all of the reign of Francis I., and are supposed to have been buried during the religious wars.

AFRICAN EXPLORATION.—News has at length been received from Khartum of that enterprising explorer, Mr. Samuel Baker. It will be recollected by all who are interested in Nile discovery that, after the departure of Captain Speke and Grant, Mr. Baker started for the South in search of the reported lake, Luta Nzige. His party has now been met with, returning to Gondokoro, a few hours march from that place, and as one of the swiftest vessels on the river, placed at his disposal by the generosity of Mr. Petherick, was waiting his arrival at Gondokoro, we may hope soon to hear of his descending the Nile and communicating the results of his journey.

DEATH OF "MANHATTAN."—The well-known New York correspondent of the *Herald and Standard*, whose letters have been read for nearly three years with unflagging interest, died suddenly on June 25, while President Lincoln was deliberating whether he should be imprisoned in Fort Lafayette or banished to the Confederate States. It is not improbable that the excitement caused by his arrest, and anxiety for the fate of his wife and only child, a daughter whom he tenderly loved, may have produced that fatal catastrophe. Joseph A. Scoville, known here as "Manhattan," and in America by the *nom de plume* of "Walter Barrett, Clerk," was born in Connecticut in 1811, and bred to commercial pursuits in one of the largest shipping houses of New York.

CONTENTS

THE WARNING VOICE ...	385	THE BARBER'S GHOST ...	409
THE STRAPSHOOTER ...	388	THE PERILS OF MOST	
THE SAVOY CHAPEL ...	391	BLANG ...	410
THE ENGAGEMENT RING ...	392	WOMAN AND HER MAS-	
THE LOVELINESS OF NA-		TER ...	411
TURE ...	395	ANCIENT AND MODERN	
LELA GRANDE ...	395	HUMBUGS ...	412
THE MONTENEGRINES ...	397	INSTANCES OF LONGEVITY	413
THE BONDAGE OF BEAN-		SCIENCE ...	413
POES ...	397	STATISTICS ...	414
THE FATAL SECRET ...	401	THE CAVALIER'S SONG ...	415
MAN AND NATURE ...	403	GEMS ...	415
ALL ALONE ...	404	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES	415
HOPE RESTORED ...	407	MISCELLANEOUS ...	415
ADVENTURE WITH A BEAR			
THE MURDERER'S TRACK	408		

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JOHN VERNON.—No; recovery of the debt is barred by the lapse of time.

C. N.—The work must be entered at Stationers' Hall, the charge for which is a shilling.

LADYBIRD.—The lines entitled "Found Drowned" we could not insert; they are therefore declined, with thanks.

A. C. R.—A woman 5 ft. 7 in. in height, may be said to be of good stature, but cannot be strictly called tall.

A. M.—No, the celebration of the anniversary of a birthday is not to be considered as the first day of a new year, but as the completion of one.

EDW. O.—If you were born at noon on the 10th of July, you will be legally of age on the 9th, and qualified to execute a settlement. The law recognizes no parts of days.

A. ST. CLAIR.—On receiving your assurance that the lines on "Forgiveness" are original, we will endeavour to find space for them.

SPERO.—Yes, moral character is very strictly inquired into by the examiners, as well as intellectual ability. Close inquiry is also made into the candidates' state of health, past and present.

BRITISH NAVY.—You can ascertain whether a marriage took place or not at any particular church by simply making application to the clerk to be allowed to search the register, the fee for doing which is a mere trifle.

W. O. N., a young gentleman about twenty years of age, replies to "Lizzie" that he would be glad of a matrimonial introduction to her, having been for many years in search of such a "loving heart" as she possesses.

A. B. C.—There is no method of eradicating the marks from the face, though, if not very deep, time will mitigate them to a certain extent. Strengthen the system by taking Peruvian bark and port wine, and practice sea-bathing.

J. O. M.—Certainly you must produce to the examiners your baptismal certificate; they are very strict in regard to this document, and any alteration of it renders the person liable, on conviction of the offence, to be fined £100.

A. B. Z.—Your handwriting is certainly peculiar. The excessive heaviness of the thick strokes is a serious defect; and this must be corrected before it would, in our opinion, pass the Civil Service Examiners.

HENRYMAN.—No, you need not come to London expressly to be examined medically. There is in Dublin a medical examiner for the Civil Service (as there is, indeed, in most chief towns of the kingdom), who examines all candidates nominated to situations in the place where he resides.

A QUEEN'S WESTMINSTER R. V.—The term *martinet*, as applied to a military officer who is a strict disciplinarian, is derived from the name of M. Martinet, an officer by whose energetic and stringent regulations the tactics and discipline of the French army were restored.

S. T. E.—The name Sarah is from the Hebrew, and signifies a princess; Emily is a variation of Amelia or Amy, and comes from the French, in which language it signifies beloved; Florence is Italian, and has a floral reference; the city so named is thence called the "city of flowers."

YOUNG LIVERPOOL. who is possessed of a comfortable and prosperous business, wishes to correspond with a young lady, neat in appearance, of business habits, good-tempered, and who is, like himself, an orphan. He is 5 ft. 7 in. in height, has brown eyes, brown hair, and high forehead.

MAY, who is nineteen years of age, tall and ladylike, has light hair, blue eyes, small mouth, hands and feet, and is of an amiable disposition, would like to correspond matrimonially with a tall, dark gentleman, possessed of a moderate fortune.

H. de A.—In the verdict of "miserable" which you pass on your own handwriting we really must acquiesce. But it is evident that you could write better if you chose, and with a little practice you might be enabled to reply creditably to your anticipated *lettres d'ouï*.

C. GOODBORE.—The Graham's town newspapers are filed at Street's, 30, Cornhill, though not for purposes of public reference, and also at Deacon's, in Leadenhall Street. Your object, therefore, may probably be best attained by application at the latter.

MYRA, NORA, ALICE, and EMILY are four good-looking and marriageable young ladies, who request us to signify this fact to all whom it may concern. "Myra" has brown hair and blue eyes; "Nora," black hair and dark eyes; "Alice," brown hair and blue eyes, and "Emily," black hair and hazel eyes.

J. K.—We cannot tell you the exact origin of the popular notion that overturning the salt at table is unlucky. We remember, however, that, in the famous picture, by Leonardo da Vinci, of the Last Supper, the painter represents Judas Iscariot as upsetting the salt; and there may possibly be some connection between that fact and the superstition.

L'AMOUR and US JEUNE BEAU.—For the life of us we cannot refrain from placing before our lady readers the appeal of these two sighing avowals in full. Its unadorned eloquence must win its way, we are certain, into at least two feminine hearts: "We (two brothers) appeal to your fair correspondents for a little sympathy, being both in a life of solibacy. The elder of us is twenty-four years of age, tall,

fair complexioned, and what would be termed handsome, in receipt of £100 a year, and speaks French and German fluently. Any young lady answering to 'L'Amour' would confer on him a great blessing. The younger is on the verge of twenty-one, and a *fac simile* of his brother, both in accomplishments and appearance, and subscribes himself 'Un Jeune Beau.' In both cases it is requested that *cartes-de-visite* be exchanged. Now, ladies, have a little pity on our poor, miserable lives, and shine as a star in our hitherto world of darkness."

D. C. O. Coventry.—We will make official inquiry into the fate of your father, and acquaint you with such information as we may be able to obtain.

JASMINE, who is eighteen, a brunette, with naturally curling hair, good complexion, regular features, dark brown eyes, tall and accomplished, and having a moderate fortune, would like a matrimonial introduction to a gentleman of moderate fortune, who must be tall, dark, and well educated.

J. CORNW.—Keep the hair clean and well brushed, and use the following hair wash:—One ounce of borax, half an ounce of camphor, both powdered fine, and dissolved in one quart of boiling water. Use when cold, and you will find it preserve and strengthen the hair. See also reply to "Beatrice."

OVERSEER, J. C. H. ADMIRE, &c.—We must to a certain extent rely upon the good faith of correspondents forwarding MS. poems to us. The authorship of the lines should have been, of course, assigned to "Adelaide Proctor," and not claimed by "Helen W. H.," who may rely that we keep an editorial rod in pickle, and can use it on occasion.

FRANK.—The standard by which we judge original poetical contributions is, we admit, somewhat high, but not too high. As a proof of our readiness at all times to insert original poems possessing fair average merit, we insert yours, although it is not quite so good as it would have been if the subject of it had been newer, and if it did not present the humorous anti-climax which occurs in the last line of the third stanza:—

THERE'S BEAUTY EVERYWHERE.

There's beauty in the babbling brook,

And in a moonlit sky;

Beauty in a dimpled cheek,

And in a laughing eye.

Beauty in the forest wild,

And in the rolling sea;

Beauty in a laughing child,

And beauty on the lea.

Beauty in the falling leaf,

And in the blooming rose;

Beauty in a pretty month,

And in a pretty nook.

Beauty in a rounded hill,

And in the shady grove;

Beauty in a smiling morn,

And Beauty too in love.

Beauty on the mountain's brow,

And beauty in the plain;

Beauty in a sunny day,

And beauty in the rain.

Beauty in the leafy tree,

And in the weeping willow;

Beauty in the waveless lake,

And in the surging billow.

Beauty in the watery deep,

And in the higher air;

In everything there's beauty,

And beauty everywhere.

P. Y.—In cases of inflammatory sore throat, leeches and blisters must be applied externally, and aperient medicine taken. Probably your affection is simply hoarseness, in which case you will derive relief from a gargle composed of seven ounces of compound infusion of roses, and one ounce of tincture of myrrh. You must avoid cold, damp, and draughts.

HENRI DE ARMANDES, a bachelor of twenty-two, belonging to a highly respectable family, being already tired of a single life, would like to hear of some young lady, moderately good-looking and accomplished, willing to enter the matrimonial state. "H. de A." is possessed of an income of £270 a year, and has also expectations. *Cartes-de-visite* to be exchanged.

CAROLINE REX will be delighted to make a matrimonial acquaintance and exchange *cartes* with "Polly" (who wrote us conjointly with "Emmie"). He is 5 ft. 9 in. in height, with dark brown hair, twenty-five years of age, passable as regards looks; has £150 per annum, besides a few hundreds at disposal, and possesses a neat little cottage, with a first-rate piano in it.

E., a young lady, tall and fair, well educated, though not accomplished, desires to make the acquaintance, with a view to matrimony, of a gentleman, who must be tall, well educated, gentlemanly not only in appearance but in reality, and possessed of a competency sufficient to support a wife in comfort. Candidates need not be good-looking, but must not have red hair.

JESSE.—A "morganatic marriage" amongst the princes and princelings of Germany is a union in which it is agreed that the wife, being of inferior birth to her husband, neither she nor her children shall enjoy the privileges of her husband's rank nor inherit his possessions. The left hand is given in the ceremony instead of the right, and the term "morganatic" is supposed to have reference to this peculiarity.

A. L.—The "gordian knot," as a term implying difficulty, arose from the circumstance that one Gordias, who had been raised from the plough to the throne of Phrygia, placed the harness of his wain and oxen in the temple of Apollo, tied in such a knot that the monarchy of the world was promised to him who could untie it. Alexander the Great surmounted the difficulty by cutting the knot with his sword.

BEATRICE.—Presuming that we understand what it is that you require, which your inquiry has not made very clear, the compound which the oriental beauties use for darkening the eyelids (not eyes, as you state) is made in the following manner:—They remove the inside of a lemon, fill it with plumbago and burnt copper, and place it on the fire until it

becomes carbonised; it is then pounded in a mortar with coral, sandal wood, pearls, ambergris, the wing of a bat, and part of the body of a chameleon, the whole of which has been previously burnt to a cinder, and whilst hot moistened with rose water.

SKIP HELP.—If you are unacquainted with the practical operation of the telegraph apparatus, you must make application to Mr. Walsh, at the chief office of the Telegraph Company, 58, Threadneedle Street, to be received as a learner. On attaining efficiency, which some ladies do in a very short time, generally in a few weeks, you will receive a proportionate remuneration; the salary paid ranging from 8s. to 18s. per week.

MINNIE, who is a brunette, about twenty-two, is desirous to obtain a matrimonial introduction to a gentleman, whom she would like to be rather tall, dark, very steady, and fond of home. Minnie is rather good looking, has received a good education, and is engaged in scholastic duties; is domesticated, possesses a good temper and cheerful disposition, and further signifies that she would not be unfavourably disposed toward "A. M. V."

FREDERICK O'M.—In general the remedy for nervousness is to be found in mixing in cheerful society, early rising, exercise in the open air, the avoidance of excitement, over study, and late meals. In spasmodic and hysterical disorders, the following mixture is frequently prescribed:—Ammoniated tincture of valerian, six drachms, and camphor mixture, seven ounces; a fourth part to be taken three times a day. You will do well, however, to consult a medical man.

E. D.—The appointment of assistant inspectors of education does not rest with the Civil Service Examiners, but with the Lord President of the Council, and no one is eligible for such an appointment who has not taken high place in the examinations before the commissioners. No candidate will be examined between the end of August and the middle of October; nor will he pass unless he can read, write, and tabulate neatly and expeditiously, and write sums quickly and accurately. Of course you may try.

JESSICA.—To destroy ants, drop some quicklime in the mouth of their nest, and wash it in with boiling water; or, dissolve some camphor in spirits of wine, mix it with water, and pour into their haunts. Tobacco water has also been found effectual against them; camphor or a sponge saturated with crocote will prevent them from infesting a cupboard. If you wish to prevent them from climbing up trees, you can defeat the little pests by placing a ring of tar upon the trunk, or by tying round it a piece of rag moistened with crocote, and kept so.

PERSEVERANCE.—If you take your signature for your motto and follow it, you cannot fail to become proficient in both your objects; a knowledge of grammar and facility in English composition not being "gifts that come by nature," but must be acquired by study and practice. In writing, you must give yourself the natural vein; think of no author's style as a guide, but follow your own impulse, giving yourself as you are, and if you do not write eloquently, you will at least write forcibly, because naturally. Your handwriting is good.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—"Frank" and "Charles" would like to form a matrimonial acquaintance with "Lizzie" and "Annie." "Charles" is twenty years of age, has dark hair, fair complexion, and holds a situation at £150 a year; "Frank" is twenty-one, very fair, with light hair, and has an annuity of £100 a year. "Lizzie" and "Annie" are *cartes-de-visite* requested—"Carrie," on receipt of "Adrian's" *carte*, will be happy to correspond matrimonially with him. In twenty-four years of age, has travelled a great deal, and received the education of an accomplished lady; possesses flaxen hair, blue eyes, good complexion, and small features—"William," who is thirty-eight years of age, has a good and improving business, is 5 ft. 10 in. in height, considered good-looking and of gentlemanly manners, would be glad to correspond matrimonially with "Ada"—"Lily G." would like to correspond with "J. de S." with a view to matrimony; is twenty-five years of age, has light complexion, brown eyes and hair; is a good housekeeper, affectionate, good-tempered, and lively. (Handwriting requires improvement)—"C. J." and "J. E." would like to correspond matrimonially with "Emmie" and "Polly." "C. J." is twenty years of age, gentlemanly in appearance, and has dark curly hair (would prefer "Polly"); "J. E." is twenty-one years of age, dark, and is of very amiable disposition—"Henry N." makes an unreserved offer of himself and all his worldly wealth to "Annie," from whom he desires to hear again. He is about twenty years of age, fair, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, well educated, and in a profession—"S. C." a widower of thirty-four, is a good way of business, would like to correspond matrimonially with "Bessie," all whose requirements in a husband he thinks he could meet, being good-tempered, affectionate, and greatly attached to home, the comforts of which he is prepared to offer—"Tom" and "Fred" are greatly interested in "Emmie" and "Polly," and would be happy to enter into a matrimonial correspondence with them. Both are young, both enterprising, and both fond of music—"Charlie" would be very happy to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes* with "Emmie." He is nineteen, good-looking, has a loving disposition, and would be very fond of home—"O. J. C." is desirous of opening a matrimonial correspondence with "E. C. D." (in No. 62). He is tall, considered good-looking, has black hair and eyes, bushy whiskers, and no moustache, twenty-five years of age, has £250 per annum, and would make a kind and affectionate husband.

PART XV. FOR AUGUST IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.

Nos. 5, 6, and 8 HAVE BEEN REPRINTED, AND MAY BE HAD TO ORDER OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

*. Now Ready, VOL. II. OF THE LONDON READER. Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. II. Price ONE PENNY.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER."

†: We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Printed and Published for the Proprietor, at 53, Strand, by J. E. GARDNER.